

Columbine shooting areas of sociology essay sample

[Sociology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Columbine High School massacre was a school shooting which occurred on 20th of April 1999, at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colorado, United States. Two senior students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold aged 18, embarked on a shooting spree in which a total of 12 students and 1 teacher were murdered. They also injured 21 other students directly, with three further people being injured while attempting to escape the school. The pair then committed suicide.

Both students were average people with normal lives. Eric was a son to a U. S. Air Force transport pilot called Wayne Harris and His mum was a Housewife. The family moved from Plattsburgh, New York to Littleton Colorado, in July 1993, when Wayne Harris retired from military service. They bought a house just South of The Columbine High School. Dylan Klebold parents attended a Lutheran church with their children, and Dylan and his older brother Byron, attended confirmation classes in accordance with Lutheran tradition. At home, the family also observed some rituals in keeping with Klebold's maternal grandfather's Jewish heritage. Dylan was a very religious child who people would have thought to not be capable of such things. Many say that there are many reasons to why this occurred. There are many macro and micro reasons.

Macro reasons are big and are to do with the whole community whereas micro reasons are small individual reasons. For example a macro reason is the American culture because they think that having a gun isn't a bad thing and everyone should have one to protect themselves. A micro reason is that both students failed in school so they decided to go kill the teachers and students at their school. I have four reasons to why the shooting probably
<https://assignbuster.com/columbine-shooting-areas-of-sociology-essay-sample/>

took place; two micro and macro. A micro reason is that it was said that both Klebold and Harris were isolated from the rest of their classmates, which made them feel helpless, insecure and depressed as well as a need for attention. Both students had a close circle of friends but still had the need of popularity as they were said to be bullied by other students for as long as four years. Being bullied and having a feel of loneliness gave them a need of more attention so they thought to do this by shooting their bullies, this way they'd be known by everyone. This links to the pair thinking there was no better way to gain a social status.

Other students would rather gain respect by taking their education seriously and having a good reputation, this way teachers and students would respect them. Obviously the pair thought otherwise. Sociologist RK Merton had researched this and found that this was 'status frustration'. Merton used the concept "status frustration" in order to describe the way that young working class males become easily frustrated with their low status in society as a result of their lack of income or underachievement. Due to this they are often labelled and get little respect from their peers or elders, this can be related to crime as they feel as if there is no alternative but to steal the possessions they want in order to stop being labelled or classed as a "loser". Another micro reason is that the pair had a mental illness. Eric Harris was rejected by Marine Corps recruiter's days before the Columbine High School massacre because he was under a doctor's care and had been prescribed an antidepressant medication. Harris prescription was for Luvox, an antidepressant medication commonly used to treat patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were radically different

<https://assignbuster.com/columbine-shooting-areas-of-sociology-essay-sample/>

individuals, with vastly different motives and opposite mental conditions. Klebold is easier to comprehend, a more familiar type. He was hot-headed, but depressive and suicidal. He blamed himself for his problems.

“ Klebold was hurting inside while Harris wanted to hurt people,” Special Agent Fuselier, the FBI’s lead Columbine investigator said. Most people had agreed to this, to give a more understanding of their actions.

One macro reason is the American society because of all the violent acts that take place every so often and the ones that had taken place in their existence. All Americans believe that the only way to solve a problem is to use action. Unfortunately every time the American government have taken action it is mostly for the worse. Americans think everyone should have a gun to protect themselves. It’s actually a norm in their society as some banks give a free gun when you open a bank account, even barbers sell bullets. You could now imagine how easily the students got hold of the guns.

In fact just after the shooting, The National Rifle Association took place without a little thought of the people at Columbine. The NRA is set up for the promotion of firearm ownership rights as well as marksmanship, firearm safety, and the protection of hunting and self-defence in the United States. As well as that it is said that males above or even under 18 years of age are taught how to use guns, probably even by their parents. There are violent acts that are broadcasted through the media which give a large effect on the actions of various people and is said the society is simply to blame for the actions of Eric and Dylan.

Another macro reason is the insufficient level of family violence. It was said that the amount of discipline that was given to kids led to total chaos and disrespect. Children were not disciplined properly which caused them to be disrespectful and pull up certain acts just like these shootings. Obviously if these kids were disciplined properly they wouldn't think to go near guns and take up the wrong path. After all in life there are times where it is difficult but the parents are meant to encourage them to go with it and later it will take a turn for the better. After the Columbine tragedy in May 1999 Senator Frank Shurden of Henryetta, proposed a bill that would remind Oklahoma parents that they had the right to use 'ordinary force' to discipline their children. He said "I feel like the lack of discipline has led to what we are into now, total chaos and disrespect. Back when I grew up, we got our tails whipped at school, then got it again when we got home. We didn't have shootings". The small minority who voted against the bill expressed concern that it would encourage child abuse. It could have been that Eric and Dylan were not given the right amount of discipline and didn't give his peers and teachers the respect they deserved.

This is a complex issue with no simple answer; sadly we don't know the real reason why Eric and Dylan went into Columbine and shot those people but, I think the main reason is their American culture and society. The media and the people are not a good influence on under 18s because of their beliefs and way of living. Guns should be banned and should only be used by government forces. This will give the environment a lot more security and people won't need to be afraid.