

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

## Summary

Maslow's hierarchy of needs as an explanation of the way we choose and meet life's goals.

## Materials

- Any good food and nutrition book.
- *Toward a Psychology of Being*  
, Maslow, A.H. (1962)
- *Motivation and Personality*  
, Maslow, A.H. (1954)

## Background for Teachers

Many food choices are based upon needs that must be met as people grow and develop. Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970) was an American who founded human psychology because he felt strongly that the best way to learn about psychology was to study well-adjusted, not disturbed, people. He moved away from the view that people are controlled by the subconscious (psychoanalysis) or by the environment (behaviorism). He believed individuals are controlled by their values and the choices they make. He devised a model of true human needs showing that a well-adjusted person satisfies the physical needs such as hunger and thirst on level one before the other safety needs such as shelter and clothing of level 2, etc. The last and highest level is self-actualization. Theoretically, if this need is fulfilled, people can reach their fullest potential. According to the theory, adults moving through all the levels they can, psychologically, risk the lower needs, such as hunger and shelter to realize in some way, self-actualization. Hunger, however, is a very basic physical need. If it has not ever been satisfied, the other, higher needs cannot be met because they are not as essential to sustaining life as hunger or the other physical needs. If you are really starving, for example, you will not be concerned with much else. Food can help you to feel companionship and belonging. We associate certain foods with pleasant or unpleasant feelings we've had. For example, babies learn to associate food with the warmth and security of the person who feeds them. Children who are promised treats, such as candy, for behaving properly will associate food with approval. The care given during illness goes hand-in-hand with chicken noodle soup. Homemade cookies call up memories of visiting grandma. Family members can show love for other family members by preparing a favorite dinner. Food makes it easier to interact with family members because of the warm feelings and atmosphere it creates. In most cultures it is considered a compliment or an honor if someone goes to the trouble of preparing and presenting a meal for someone's enjoyment.

## Instructional Procedures

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

#### OPTION #1

Prepare a series of 5 large charts using a different color for each one. Head each chart with one of MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS: self-actualization, esteem, love, safety, and physical needs. See [MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS TRANSPARENCY](#).

Divide the class into groups. Assign the students in each group to one of Maslow's needs. Students will brainstorm and/or research to:

- define the level of need, according to Maslow's model
- list needs belonging to that level
- describe how those needs are met

Using a magic marker have each student go to the chart corresponding to group assignment and record his/her information.

OR

Divide the class into groups. Assign each group one of Maslow's needs. Have each group create a collage from magazine pictures that illustrates the need. A spokesperson from each group can show and explain the collage to the class

Bring the class back together and discuss:

What order are the needs placed in?

Why are they placed in this order?

OPTION #2

Give the students the chart showing [MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS](#). Have them work in pairs to chart and answer the questions.

OPTION #3

Have the students take [MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS QUIZ](#). Discuss the answers in class.

Ask the students to defend their answers.

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