

FRAYER MODEL

What Is the Frayer Model?

The Frayer Model is an instructional strategy teachers would use for helping students learn new concepts through the use of attributes and nonattributes. The Frayer Model has several steps where the teacher is helping students learn a concept by giving examples and nonexamples of the concept. Steps (originally seven) include the following:

1. Define the concept giving attributes of the concept.
2. Show students how this concept differs from other similar concepts (by highlighting noncritical attributes).
3. Provide examples and explain what makes these examples.

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4. Provide nonexamples and explain what makes these nonexamples.
5. Provide students with examples and nonexamples and ask them to determine whether they are examples or nonexamples.

How Does the Frayer Model Work?

The Frayer Model is usually done with a critical concept that is part of a unit or theme. It is time-consuming and so would usually be revisited over several days of study. When using the Frayer Model, the teacher is directly teaching students about the concept by providing specific attributes/nonattributes and examples/nonexamples to refine students' definitions of the concept. In the example here, the English teacher is using the Frayer Model to teach her students the critical attributes of the word *zealot* prior to reading *Armageddon Summer* (Yolen and Coville 1998).

1. A *zealot* is someone who is filled with zeal (intense devotion or enthusiasm) for something. This word is usually given to someone who is so devoted to the cause that they can seem fanatical about it. A zealot is someone whose devotion is so great that it can seem to be excessive or irrational. The cause to which a zealot is devoted takes precedence over almost everything else in the person's life.
2. If you looked up the word *zealot* in a thesaurus, you might find synonyms like *supporter* or *believer*, but a zealot is more than a supporter or believer. Zealots believe in what they are doing and they support a cause, but they do so to an excessive degree. If we were looking at degrees of intensity, *believer* would be at the bottom and *zealot* would be over the top!
3. We often think of those with religious fanaticism as zealots. For example, most people would probably consider the men who flew the airplanes into the World Trade Center as zealots. They believed so much in their cause that they were willing to give up their lives for the cause. Some people believe that the followers of Jim Jones who were willing to drink Kool-Aid laced with cyanide in a mass

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<p style="text-align: center;">Define the concept</p> <p>A zealot is someone who is filled with zeal or intense enthusiasm for something. A zealot's devotion is so great it seems excessive or irrational.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Is different from similar concepts . . .</p> <p>People who care about a cause or who are active members of groups such as church, a men's league, etc.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Examples of the concept are . . .</p> <p>religious fanatics groups cult followers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Nonexamples of the concept are . . .</p> <p>Civil rights activists Church goers Soldiers Green peace members</p>
<p>I'll remember the word by . . .</p> <p>Breaking zealot apart. ze/alot. I'll remember that a zealot will do a lot for their devotion to the point that it's irrational and excessive.</p>	

suicide were religious zealots who were willing to die for the cause they believed in.

4. Just because someone believes deeply in something, it does not make that person a zealot. Someone who believes in working for

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civil rights for others, who is devoted to his or her faith, who is an enthusiastic member of a club or group, or who supports a political cause would not be considered a zealot. Such people obviously are enthusiastic about their groups or causes but not to the point of abandoning all other human values.

5. Following are some examples and nonexamples of the word *zealot*. Discuss how you would classify these: a groupie for a band, a minister of a church, a soldier who willingly dies to save his platoon, a presidential candidate, and Yolanda Saldivar.
6. Create your own connections to the word *zealot* in order to help you commit the word to memory.

When and Why Would I Use the Frayer Model?

Due to the extensive time it takes to use the Frayer Model, you would probably only use this instructional model when introducing students to an umbrella concept that is extremely significant to a unit of study. After your initial teaching, you could return to the model several times throughout the unit. The example given here was connected to a novel being read in language arts class; however, the instructional strategy can be used in any content area. For example, if students in science were beginning their study of force and motion, the teacher might guide them through the Frayer Model with *force* and *motion* as the concepts. In this way, the teacher could assess students' prior knowledge of the concepts and add to that knowledge with attributes of the concepts.

Using science concepts as an example, students would first define the concepts in terms of their general knowledge of the words: forcing someone or something to act against its will or any movement. The teacher would give students the definition of how these words are used in science. The students and teacher would then discuss and note how force and motion are related to, but different from, gravity, free fall, acceleration, and velocity. In this way, the model helps facilitate the

discussion of academic vocabulary that will be used in this unit of study. Students could then read their textbooks, *The Story of Science* (Hakim 2005), and *Fatal Forces* (Arnold 1999). After reading from these three sources, groups of students could create their own examples and nonexamples of the concepts of force and motion in science.

A modified version of this process, as shown in the graphic organizer, would provide students with guided practice in discovering and noting attributes and nonattributes or examples and nonexamples of words. Students' independence with the graphic will depend on the demonstrations the teacher provides.

Research/Origins/Further Reading

Arnold, N. 1999. *Fatal Forces*. New York: Scholastic.

Frayer, D. A., W. C. Frederick, and H. J. Klausmeier. 1969. *A Schema for Testing the Level of Concept Mastery*. Technical Report No. 16. Madison: University of Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning.

Hakim, J. 2005. *The Story of Science: Newton at the Center*. Washington and New York: Smithsonian Books.

Ryder, R. J., and M. F. Graves. 1994. *Reading and Learning in Content Areas*. New York: Macmillan College.

Yolen, J., and B. Coville. 1998. *Armageddon Summer*. New York: Harcourt Children's Books.

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