

Psychology

Mrs. Riddle

Lesson 27 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Objectives

- To demonstrate how need motivates action
- To analyze and evaluate Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- To compare Maslow's concept of a self-actualized individual to a typical student's view of a self-actualized individual

Abraham Maslow, a humanist psychologist, developed a theory of motivation based on a hierarchy of needs. Maslow identified fundamental needs, which include both immediate and long-term survival needs; psychological needs of love, belonging, and esteem; and self-actualization needs. Maslow believed that once the basic level of needs is satisfied, a person is motivated to strive to fulfill the next level of needs. The most basic needs are biological in nature. However, once a person fulfills these biological needs, social needs become the object of attainment. The highest of the social needs is self-actualization, which is the process of becoming the best person one can be. Further, Maslow believes that everyone tries to attain self-actualization. He categorizes a few rare individuals such as Abraham Lincoln, Mohandas Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as having attained self-actualization.

Procedure

1. Present the following situation to the class.

This class is stranded on a deserted island. The island is in the northern Atlantic, and it is September. There are no other people or buildings on the island; however, there is vegetation.

Conduct a brief class discussion that focuses on the first steps students would take to survive (*search for food and water, find firewood, build shelters, build latrines, etc.*).

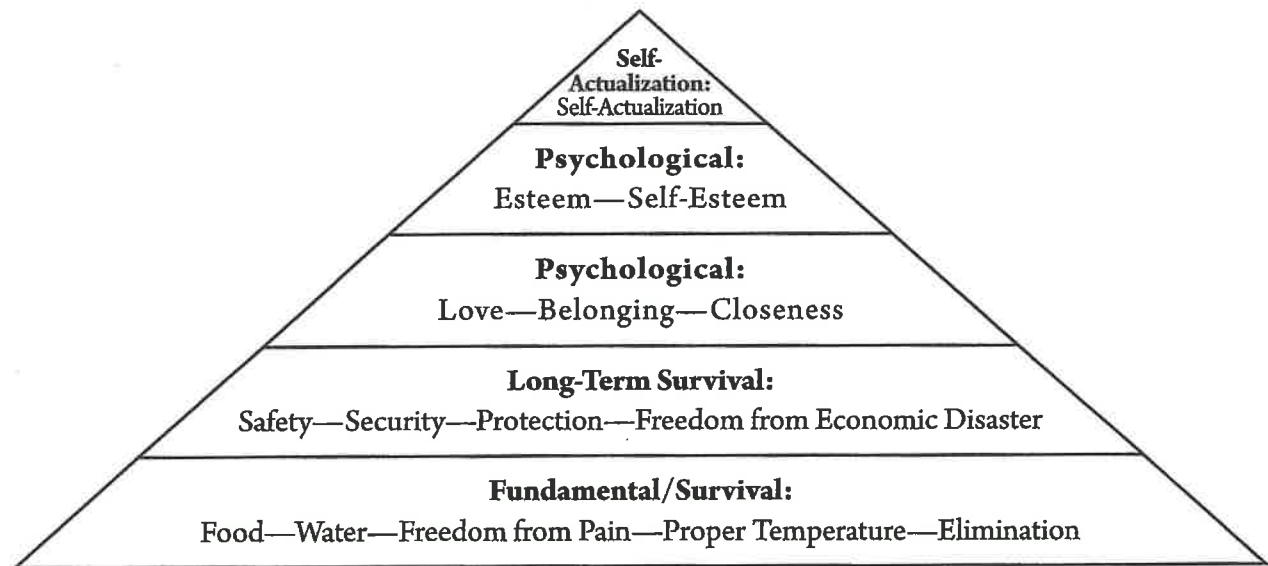
Have this discussion with your family, then complete lesson.

Bring back your complete assignment when school resumes, class discussion will follow.

Application of the Hierarchy of Needs

Part A

Listed below is a summary of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Study these steps, and keep in mind the activity you just completed.



Part B

Compare your group's responses to the deserted island scenario with Maslow's hierarchy of needs in Part A of this handout.

1. Which of your group's actions were similar to the hierarchy presented by Maslow?
2. Which of your group's actions differed from Maslow's hierarchy?

Part C

For each of the categories listed below, indicate what occurs if the specified need is not met.

1. Food
2. Water
3. Freedom from pain
4. Elimination
5. Safety
6. Security
7. Protection
8. Freedom from economic disaster
9. Love
10. Belonging
11. Closeness
12. Esteem
13. Self-esteem
14. Self-actualization

Self-Actualization

Part A

Abraham Maslow defines *self-actualization* as developing and reaching one's individual potential, being the best person one can be.

1. Name a person who you think has reached the level of self-actualization. This can be a person drawn from personal experience, current events, or history.

2. List the qualities of this person.

Part B

Read the traits that Maslow believes are characteristic of self-actualized people.

- a. are realistic
- b. are accepting of themselves
- c. are independent
- d. have a deep affection for a few people
- e. don't point their sense of humor at another group
- f. are open and spontaneous
- g. feel they have a mission in life
- h. have experienced spiritual connections
- i. are nonconforming
- j. openly admit their virtues

In what ways is your description of a self-actualized person similar to and different from Maslow's description?

Evaluate Maslow's theory concerning the hierarchy of needs by answering the questions that follow.

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Extension

1. Investigate the life of one of the people Maslow identified as self-actualized (Thomas Jefferson; Eleanor Roosevelt; Mohandas Gandhi; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; or Abraham Lincoln). Compare and contrast this person with Maslow's list. Do you agree with Maslow's categorization? Write your conclusions in a short paper. Submit it to your teacher for extra credit.
2. Make a chart that compares a person's development from infancy to adulthood with the hierarchy of needs. Give a brief oral report to the class on your chart and post it on the bulletin board of your classroom.