

Study Guide – Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need

Key Concepts to Know

- **Definition:** Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as a pyramid.
- **Original Five Needs:**
 1. **Physiological** – Air, water, food, shelter, sleep, etc.
 2. **Safety** – Personal and financial security, health, stability.
 3. **Love/Belonging** – Family, friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance.
 4. **Esteem** – Respect (from self and others), self-confidence, recognition.
 5. **Self-Actualization** – Achieving one’s potential, creativity, personal growth.
- **Extended Hierarchy:** Later, Maslow included **Cognitive needs**, **Aesthetic needs**, and at the top, **Transcendence** (spiritual needs/altruism).

How the Hierarchy Works

- Needs at the base (physiological) must be at least partly satisfied before higher needs become motivators.
- Needs can overlap; satisfaction isn’t all-or-nothing.
- If “deficiency needs” (physiological, safety, love, esteem) are unmet, a person experiences anxiety/tension.

Critical Points

- **Deficiency needs (D-needs):** These must be met for psychological stability.
- **Growth needs:** Needs for personal development and fulfillment (self-actualization, transcendence).
- **Flexibility:** Maslow recognized needs can be pursued out of order and that life situations may shift priorities.

- **Motivation:** Fulfilling one set of needs motivates pursuit of higher needs.

Sample Applications

- **Workplace:** Employees need financial security (safety) and a sense of belonging (love) before focusing on achievement (esteem).
- **Education:** Students who lack food/sleep (physiological) or safety (home environment) will struggle to focus on learning and achievement.

Tips for Exam Success

- Memorize the order and examples for each level.
- Be able to apply the hierarchy to real-world scenarios.
- Understand criticisms (e.g., lack of supporting evidence, cultural variations).
- Know Maslow's later extensions to the theory.

Quick Practice

1. List the five original needs in order.
2. Give an example for each need from your own life.
3. Explain the difference between self-esteem and self-actualization.
4. Why might someone skip a need or have overlapping needs?