

The Frayer Model

Help learners distinguish a concept from its near misses, rather than memorising a definition.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Choose one concept and two examples that reveal its boundaries. Prepare four spaces: meaning, features, examples and non-examples.

Teach it in four steps

1. Start with an example: show ice melting and ask what changes and what stays the same.
2. Build a student-friendly meaning together: a physical change changes form or state without making a new substance.
3. Pairs sort melting ice, dissolving salt, burning paper and rusting iron. Ask them to explain a difficult choice.
4. Complete the four spaces, then test the meaning against a fresh case.

Science: physical change

Meaning: the substance remains the same. Features: a change in shape or state; no new substance. Examples: ice melting, paper being cut. Non-examples: paper burning, iron rusting.

Teacher: "Being reversible can be a clue, but is it our definition? What substance is present before and after?"

Check understanding

Give each learner a new case: crushing a piece of chalk. Ask for a decision and a reason referring to the substance. A correct label without a reason is not enough.

Fade the support

Remove the four-box organiser next time. Ask learners to explain the concept and reject a near miss in two sentences.

Adapt it across subjects

Maths: compare rectangles with non-rectangular parallelograms; separate necessary features from typical appearances.

Humanities: distinguish migration from tourism using duration and purpose, while discussing cases that need more information.

Adjust the language support

A1-A2 access: keep the subject goal; use visuals, a small word bank, pointing or drawing and partner rehearsal. Use a home language to establish meaning where helpful.

B1-B2 extension: ask for fuller explanations, precise subject vocabulary and qualifications. Reduce sentence openings when learners can organise the response independently.

These are starting points, not placement rules. Judge support from the learner's response to this task; proficiency can differ across skills.