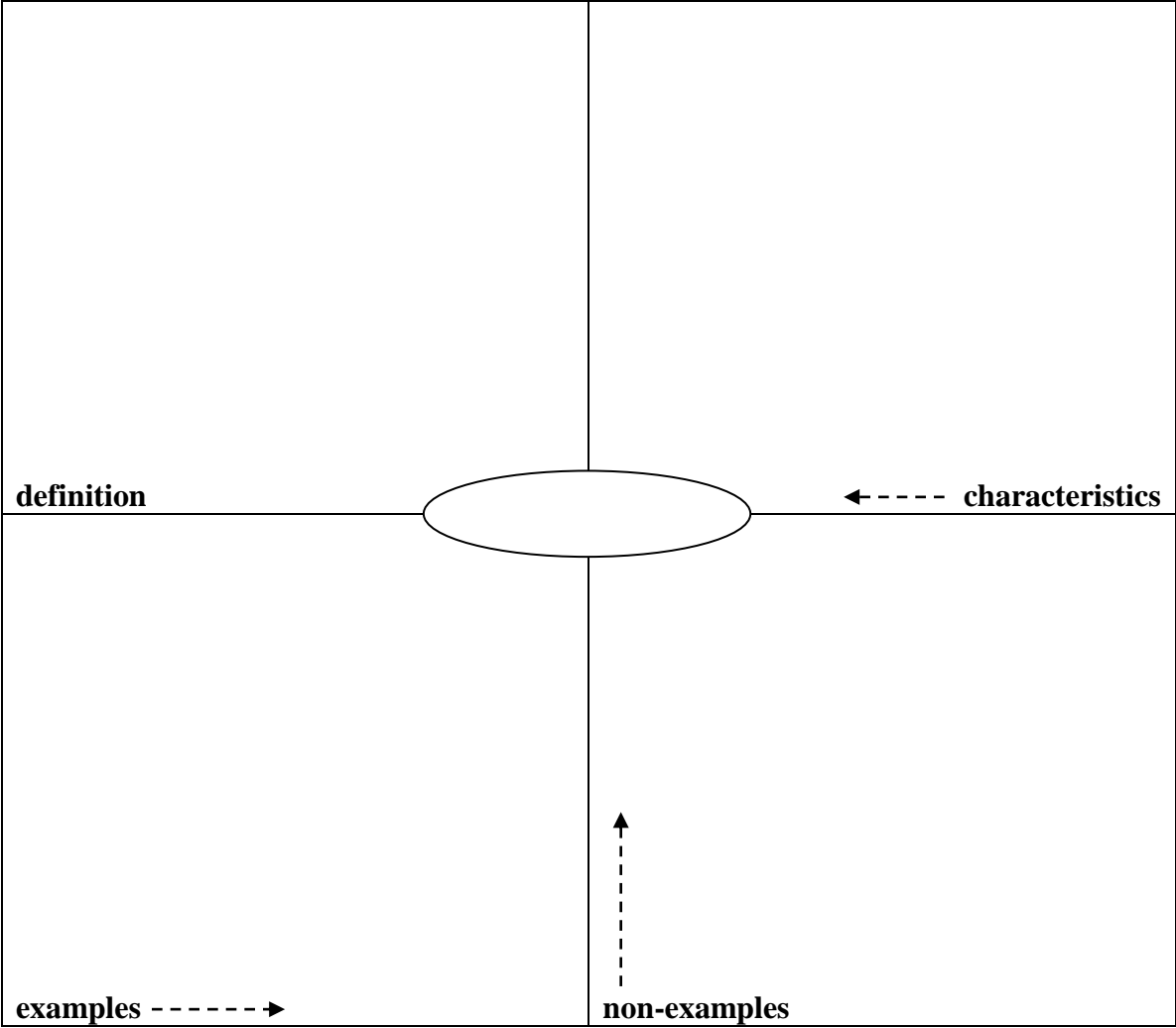


Frayer Model



Supplemental Vocabulary Strategies: **New Words, New Concepts**

Teachers in content areas face two challenges with vocabulary. The first is the difficulty of reading passages that contain unfamiliar everyday words – “life words” – such as animate, ascend, camouflage or enigma (from Marzano, Kendall & Paynter’s 6th grade word list).

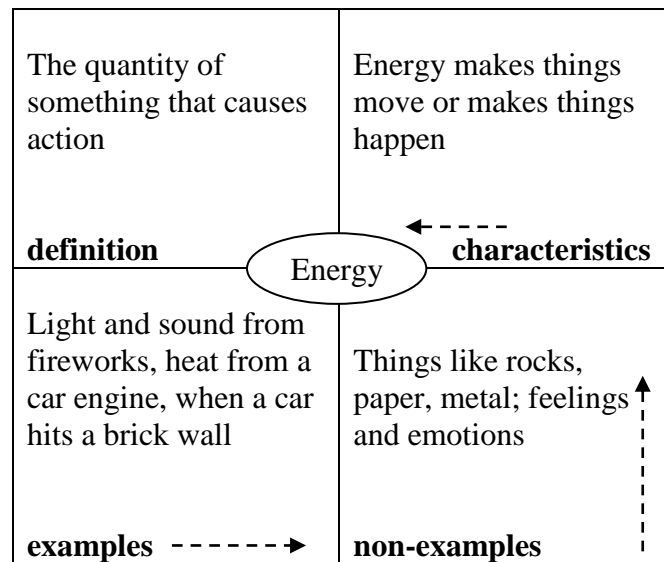
The second is the difficulty of learning new concepts associated with technical terms in science, social studies or mathematics, such as photosynthesis, biome, parallelogram, topographic or genocide. These terms embody multi-faceted, interconnected aspects of a subject and can’t be learned in isolation.

Three approaches for learning the concepts behind technical terms are presented here.

One method for keeping track of concept words as they are being learned is the Frayer Model. It’s as much a “writing to learn” strategy as a reading comprehension strategy. Students start by listing examples and non-examples of the concept. Then they list its characteristics. Finally, with that background knowledge, they create a definition. This usually happens while they study the concept through experimentation, discussion, problem-solving, reading primary source materials, etc.

The Frayer Model

Another variation for vocabulary development is the four-quadrant Frayer Model. This is especially good for rich concept words, like matter, energy, force, biome, species, justice, equality, etc. It’s as much a “writing to learn” strategy as a reading comprehension strategy. Students start by listing examples and non-examples of the concept. Then they list its characteristics. Finally, with that background knowledge, they create a definition.



A note: Many words that students encounter in content classes can be confusing, because their content-specific meanings might be different from their everyday meanings. In mathematics, for example, words like prime, median, mean, mode, product, dividend, difference, operation, complimentary/complementary have very specific technical meanings, but very different everyday meanings.