

# How to do a Mind Map

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Mind mapping (or concept mapping) involves writing down a central idea and thinking up new and related ideas, which radiate out from the center. By focusing on key ideas written down in your own words, and then looking for branches out and connections between the ideas, you are mapping knowledge in a manner which will help you understand and remember new information.

## Look for relationships

Use lines, colors, arrows, branches or some other way of showing connections between the ideas generated on your mind map. These relationships may be important in you understanding new information or in constructing a structured essay plan. By personalizing the map with your own symbols and designs, you will be constructing visual and meaningful relationships between ideas which will assist in your recall and understanding.

## Draw quickly on unlined paper without pausing, judging or editing

All of these things promote linear thinking and the idea of mind mapping is to think creatively and in a non-linear manner. There will be plenty of time for modifying the information later on, but at this stage, it is important to get every possibility into the mind map. Sometimes it is one of those obscure possibilities that may become the key to your knowledge of a topic.

## Use capitals

The idea of using capitals is to encourage you to get down only the key points. Capitals are also easier to read in a diagram. You may, however, wish to write down some explanatory notes in lower case. Some students do this when they revisit the mind map at a later date, while others write in such things as assessment criteria in this way.

## Put main idea in the center

Most students find it useful to turn their page on the side and do a mind map in "landscape" style. With the main idea or topic in the middle of the page this gives the maximum space for other ideas to radiate out from the center.

## Leave lots of space

Some of the most useful mind maps are those which are added to over a period of time. After the initial drawing of the mind map, you may wish to highlight things, add information or add questions. For this reason, it is a good idea to leave lots of space.

See mind map illustrations on next page.

