

LEARN WITH MIND MAPS

**How To Enhance Your Memory, Take Better Notes,
Boost Your Creativity, And Gain An Edge In Work Or
School -- Easily.**



Michelle Mapman

Learn With MindMaps

How To Enhance Your Memory, Take Better Notes, Boost Your Creativity, And Gain An Edge In Work Or School — Easily.

By Michelle Mapman

FREE BONUS



Thank you for purchasing Learn With Mindmaps.

As a thank you, you can get a FREE year's activation key for Concept Draw.

Concept Draw is a lead mindmapping software that ordinarily costs \$199.

To get your key, just go right here and follow the instructions:

☐ <http://learningwithmindmaps.com/>

You'll be able to get started very quickly.

And it's a good thing, because mindmapping is a VERY fantastic skill to have.

Why You Should Read This Book

From a very early age, we have been taught WHAT we need to learn -- but never HOW to learn it.

And while we may have done OK with that, the truth is -- you can unlock your brain to do MUCH MORE than you probably think possible.

But to become a successful learner, you need some basic training.

And that's where this book comes in.

See, this book will show you how to rewire the way your brain works.

When you go through the following pages and implement it, you can - and will - drastically improve your thinking in school, work, and life.

You'll be able to use the secrets of Leonardo Da Vinci and Albert Einstein (who used mind maps) to learn more meaningfully, efficiently, and effectively.

You'll be able to speed up your learning.

You'll be significantly more creative.

You'll know how to think out of the box.

You'll learn to visually organize and integrate information so that you can think more clearly and powerfully.

You'll know how to take better, faster, and more efficient notes.

You'll improve your writing, studying, brainstorming, and presenting skills.

You'll increase your memory stamina, being able to remember far more things than you thought you could before.

You'll be able to break down the "information overload" coming at you and start to break down complex information -- assimilating it, and then retaining it.

All of this will give you a cutting edge in school and in the workplace.

And it's exactly what you'll get from this book.

It doesn't matter if you're a student, teacher, professional, business owner, or an author -- ANYONE who wants change the way they plan and think for the better will get a lot of benefit from this book.

And, to make sure you fully understand everything, we have taken each concept and drilled it down into a step-by-step manner. Every step of the way comes with an illustrated diagram so that you fully understand how to do everything.

So go through... read this book, implement it, and watch things start to majorly change for you.

And don't forget to take advantage of our FREE BONUS at the end -- a full 1 year trial of ConceptDraw. Just sign up to our bonus page with your receipt # and you'll get automatic access.

Now, let's get going...

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Chapter 1: What is Mind Mapping?

You may have heard a lot about mindmapping, but you might not yet know why mind maps are absolutely FANTASTIC to use in your everyday life.

Simply put – they can increase your memory, help you study, let you retain books better, and really just start to improve every single area of your life.

Let's go over exactly what a mindmap is, first, and then we'll go over how you can use one to improve your life.

See, mind mapping is when an idea, word, or concept is explored through a diagram.

For example, maybe someone wants to go through and explore a book that they just read.

They would put the name of the book in the center of the mind map and the supporting ideas and concepts are added through lines, circles, squares, images or shapes.

Information is highlighted by the use of color and other creative uses of the different elements used in the mind map.

They can either be done by hand or by using software but the ultimate goal is to flesh out a central idea or concept visually.

Many of us have used mind maps in some form or fashion without realizing we were doing it. If you've ever been in a class or workshop where the person leading it drew a central concept on the board then connected related concepts to it using lines, then you've experienced a mind map. Most likely it was a very simple form but it was one nonetheless.

Mind maps have been in existence for many decades and were born out of other similar concepts that have been around much longer.

History of Mind Maps

A mind map is a type of spider diagram.

A spider diagram is an extension of a Venn or Euler diagram which is a diagram that shows all of the possible relationships between a specific set of objects.

Venn diagrams have been around since the late 1800's and were first used by John Venn. They are diagrams that use circles to analyze different probability propositions. They are used most commonly in the fields of probability, logic, statistics, linguistics and computer science. Euler diagrams also use circles to analyze the relationship between a set of objects. The first use of Euler diagrams is typically associated with Leonhard Euler who lived during the 1700's.

Venn diagrams are very closely associated with Euler diagrams also referred to as Eulerian circles.

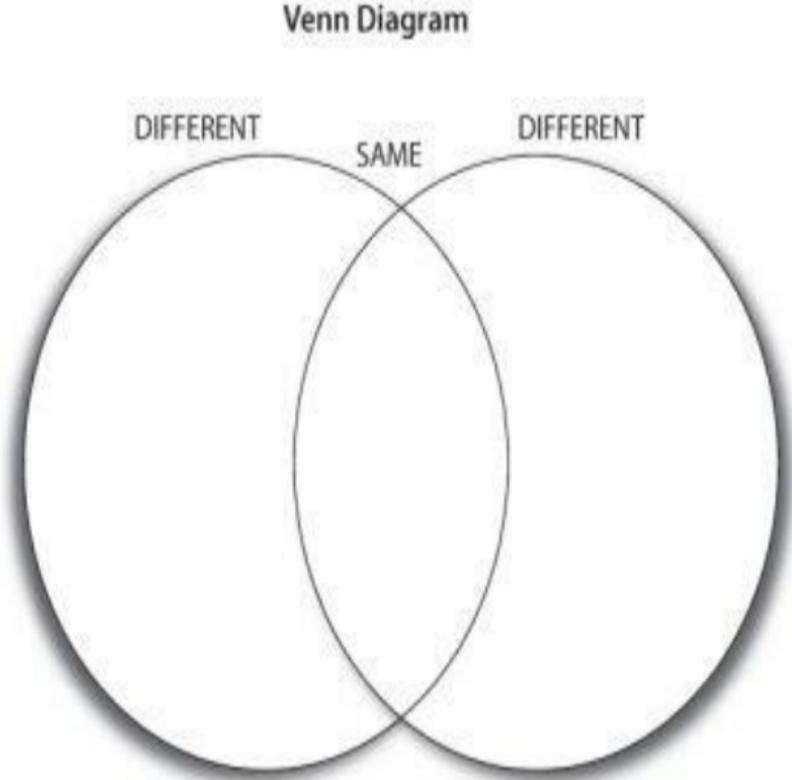
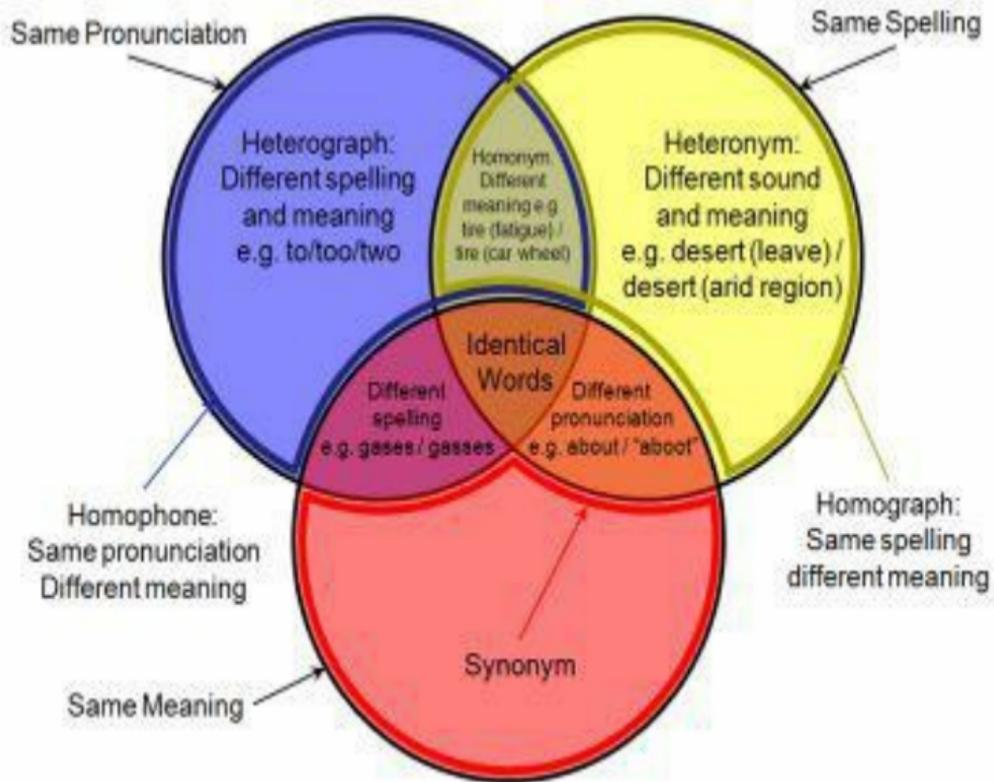


Figure 1-1 Simple Venn Diagram



Words Different In Pronunciation, Spelling, and Meaning

Figure 1-2 Venn Diagram

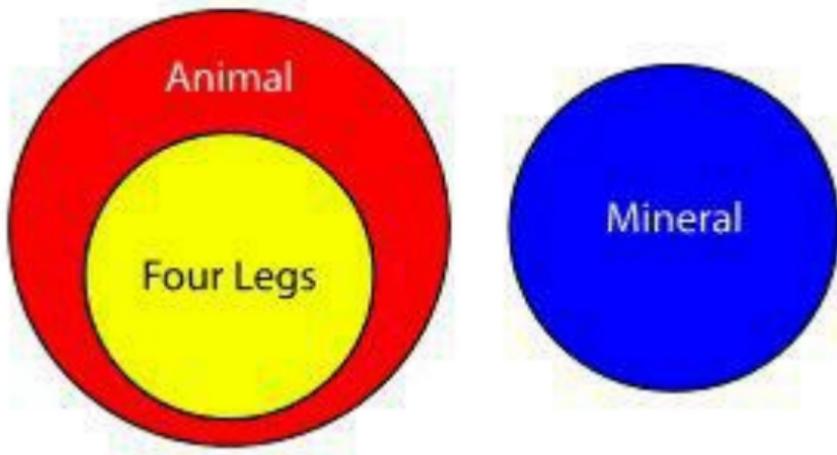


Figure 1-3 Euler Diagram

Figure 1-1 and 1-2 are examples of Venn diagrams. Figure 1-1 is a very simplistic Venn diagram with two different sets. It can be used to analyze the points where two different objects have shared similarities. Figure 1-2 is a more complex Venn diagram with three different sets which are used to analyze how the three different sets intersect with each other.

Figure 1-3 is a Euler diagram. You can see how they both involve circles but in slightly different ways. While a Venn diagram highlights all possibilities that are present between the different sets being explored, Euler diagrams highlight a subset of the possibilities that are present between the different sets. With Euler diagrams, certain possibilities may not be highlighted at all.

The spider diagram is an expansion of the Venn and Euler diagrams that adds existential points to them using branches to link the different sets together. Spider diagrams expand on the black and white comparisons of Venn and Euler diagrams and adds an "or" component. For example, if a Venn diagram is analyzing the similarities between dogs and horses, the spider diagram would address those similarities between dogs and horses and add in cats to the mix. It essentially provides the opportunity for you to address more complex probability theories like those found in "if...then" situations.

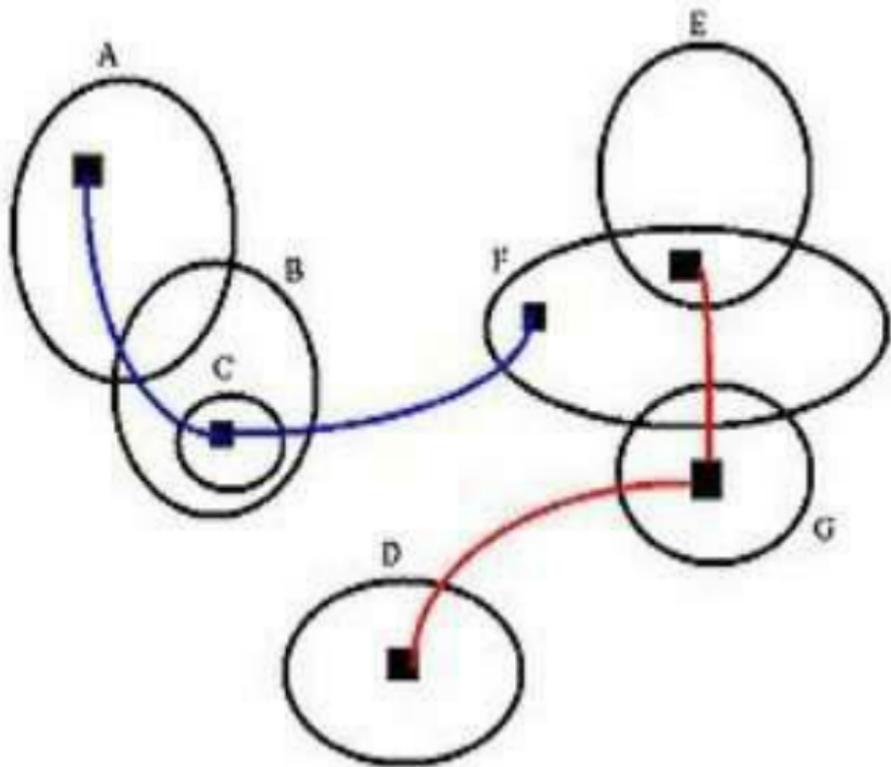


Figure 1-4 Spider Diagram

A mind map looks much more like a spider diagram than a Venn or Euler diagram but rather than having multiple sets or objects being analyzed, it has one single object that is being fleshed out more fully through the branches.

The term mind map was first popularized in the 1970's by Tony Buzan a psychology author and television personality with a television series that aired on BBC TV called *Use Your Head*. Through this series and the companion book series, Buzan introduced and popularized the term mind map. The idea was inspired, in large part, by the concept of general semantics which was developed by Alfred Korzybski. The principles of general semantics explain that human beings

are limited in what they know by their own experiences and personal instincts. That is a very oversimplified explanation of general semantics as I understand it. Through general semantics, Korzybski suggests that we approach life with an attitude of “I don’t know. Let’s see.” This means giving yourself the ability to consider that you don’t automatically know everything. It also means that you open your mind to possibilities that lie outside of your sphere of experience.

General semantics suggests that because of our language and our pre-disposed notions we experience world through a filter that alters our ability to truly face reality. There are some tools that are suggested to help someone practice general semantics.

1. Sit in silence

By taking the time to sit in silence and truly consider what’s happening in the world, a person can look past those barriers that cause us to view the world through our own perspective. It isn’t that much different than intentional meditation where you are focused on receiving the true reality of the world.

2. E-prime

E-prime is short for English Prime. E-prime is a prescriptive version of the English language without all forms of the verb “to be”. It was proposed by Dr. David Bourland, Jr. as an addition to general semantics after the death of Korzybski. Dr. Bourland studied under Korzybski and suggested E-prime as a way to enforce the teachings of general semantics. He compiled and published three volumes of essays to support E-prime. *To Be or Not: An E-Prime Anthology*, *More E-Prime: To Be or Not II*: 1994 and *E-Prime III: a third anthology*: 1997.

These are just two of the more simple tools used to enforce the teachings of general semantics which is a teaching largely used in different areas of education that involve communication like journalism. Buzan worked as an educational consultant and wrote several books on various aspects of the brain as it relates to memory. He created mind mapping as a way to better reflect how the mind works to receive and process information. His theory was based on the idea that when readers scan a page they do it in a non-linear fashion that isn’t reflected in the traditional way that information is shared in the written form especially through outlines.

Forms of Visualization

Mind mapping is a form of data visualization. It allows the person creating the mind map to

visually outline information as it relates to a specific concept. There are other forms of visualization that are routinely used to take a concept from the idea phase into the execution phase.

Concept Maps

Concept maps are diagrams that show the relationship between concepts. It's a graphical tool used to organize knowledge.

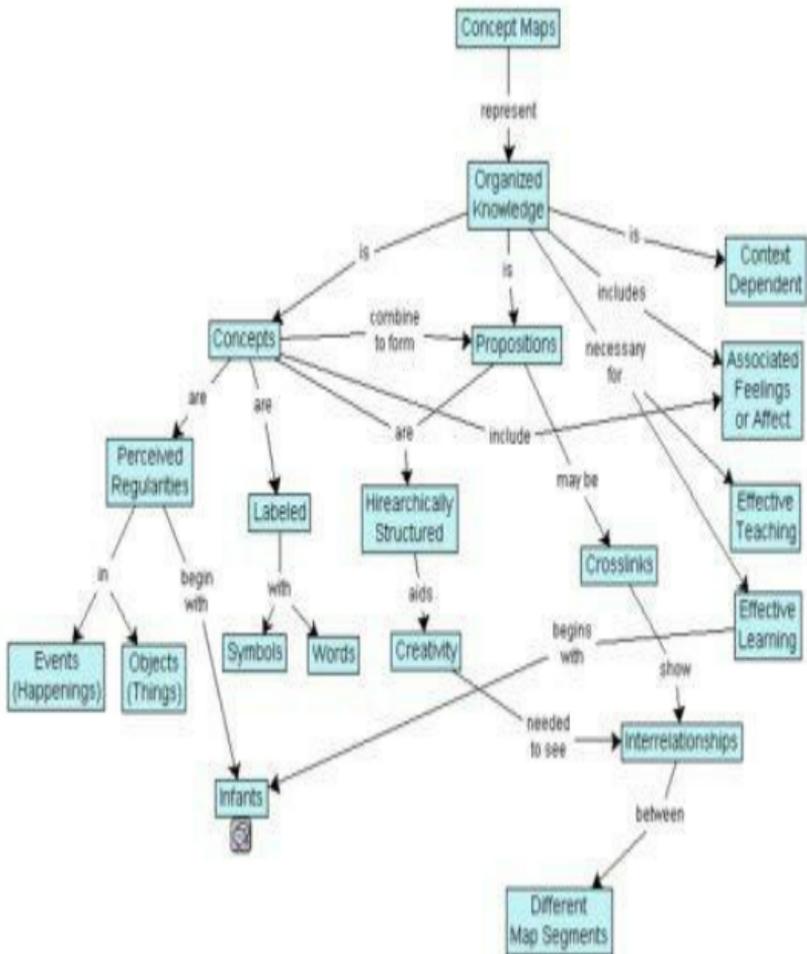


Figure 1-5 Concept Map

As shown in Figure 1-5 a concept map analyzes multiple concepts typically using boxes or circles that are connected using arrows that have been labeled with linking phrases in a downward structure. Unlike a mind map, a concept map isn't based on

a central idea. It involves multiple ideas that are analyzed as they relate to other ideas.

Modelling Graphs

Graphs that are created with the idea of indicating a relationship between different objects are considered modelling graphs. These are typically fairly straight forward and the relationship is indicated with black lines. They differ from mind maps because mind maps do indicate relationship but as it is analyzed within the mental context of the person creating the mind map. While there is a procedure for creating a mind map, the way it looks will vary depending on what's being analyzed and who's doing it.

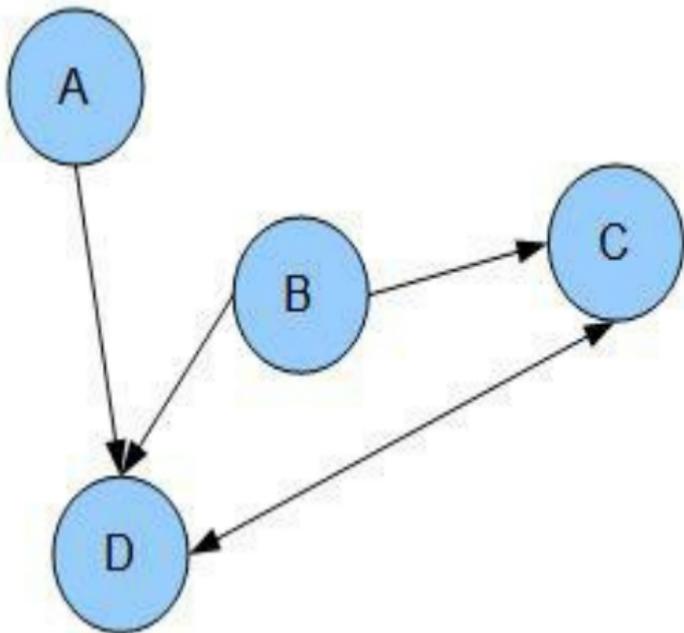


Figure 1-6 Modelling Graph or Graphical Model

Concept maps and modelling graphs both analyze concepts and information but unlike mind maps, they have a very specific construct and purpose that limits the way the analysis will take place. Mind maps are created to follow the flow of the brain of the person creating it. So while it does have a structure, much like that of the concept maps and modeling graphs, its structure is more flexible. Mind mapping can be a very powerful tool to create structure and organization around a central theme. While the most obvious use for a mind map would be in the brainstorming process, I'm going to go into further detail and show you how they can be used for many other practical applications.

Chapter 2: Why Should I Use Mind Mapping?

Now that you have some insight into what mind maps are and where they come from, you may be wondering why you should use one. There are many reasons that I will get into shortly. But first I have a few questions for you.

1. Have you ever had an idea that you wanted to explore but got stuck in the process?
2. Do you ever wish your memory was better?
3. Have you ever wished you were more organized?
4. Is your desk at home/work a mess of papers that you have to sift through every time you need something?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you can benefit from using a mind map. If you answered no to all of these questions, you can still benefit from mind maps. The great thing about mind maps is that they are designed to be user friendly and work in a wide variety of situations.

Improves memory

Do you feel like your memory was great as a kid but got progressively less effective as you aged?

I think most of us feel this way at one point or another in our lives. But age is not entirely the cause. The reason you were able to remember so well as a kid is largely because you didn't have a lot of information to retain. Your brain was a virtual clean slate so the information that you received was able to be fully processed and retained. As you age the amount of information you receive increases exponentially. You go from only having to focus on play to having to focus on school which gets progressively more complex as you go from elementary school to college. Then once you finish college, you have to focus on your job, your family and your daily responsibilities. Toss in there our need for socialization and activity and you add friends and hobbies to that list. When you really take a moment to think (It's ok, you can do that here), you have a lot of information in your mind at any given moment and all of it is important to you for some reason or another.

No wonder we become more forgetful as we age. We go from a very singular focus to a multi focused lifestyle and fill our brains with a lot of facts and information that can be jumbled together depending on how we receive and process it. So give yourself a break. You're probably not as forgetful as you think. You are just being bombarded with information and not allowing yourself the time to process it properly. But now that you are aware that information overload could be the reason why your memory isn't as good as it used to be, you may be wondering how to fix it.

1. Focus and concentrate

One of the biggest reasons why we lose our ability to remember things is because we're not actively focusing on the information when we receive it. How many times have you been told something while you were doing something else? When you tried to think back to remember, your mind seems to go blank and you blame it on your bad memory before moving on to the next thing. It's not your memory that's bad. It's your level of concentration and focus. I can't help but blame some of this on the increased popularity of multi-tasking. Yes it is sometimes important to juggle multiple tasks at once but there are many people who have made multi-tasking a way of life. This is highly inefficient because you are essentially splitting your attention between multiple things as a habit.

Multi-tasking is valuable when you're doing things that don't require a lot of in depth thought. For example if you need to do a large mailing, it's very possible to stuff envelopes while you have a conversation with someone else. Stuffing envelopes doesn't require much advanced thought and once you get into a rhythm, it becomes an automatic process. The challenge comes when you are having a conversation while reading. Both tasks require some level of advanced thought and focus. If you try to do them simultaneously under the guise of multi-tasking, you may look up and realize that you didn't retain any information from either the conversation or the passage you were reading. When you multi-task, your productivity drops by 40%. Your brain is actually unable to truly process doing two or more things at one time. Rather, it switches back and forth between the different tasks you're tackling. So rather than being more efficient, you are really just splitting your brain waves. We

have to take the time to truly focus on the information that we need to receive and process. But this doesn't mean that you have to take several minutes to do this. Oftentimes it only takes a few seconds to stop, receive the information and process it. Then you can move on to something else. But in this case when you need to recall the information, you'll find it much easier.

2. Use association and grouping

When you have to remember something, especially when it's something new and unfamiliar, one of the easiest ways is to associate it with something you already know. You can associate it with a specific word or an experience. Anything you can use that will connect the concept in your brain will make it easier to recall later. Once we've retained a specific piece of information, it becomes a part of our internal knowledge bank. If we're able to tie new information to our knowledge bank, it's easier to remember. Henry Markram at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne conducted a study of the neurons in the brain that process and retain information. He discovered that although the brain is malleable and can grow and change as we do, the information we receive is organized more structurally like in lego blocks. He found and coined the "common neighbor rule": *the chance that any two neurons are linked, and the strength of the bridge between them, is directly proportional to number of neighbors they share*. Essentially, if the information you receive is similar to information you already know, it will be strengthened in your knowledge base and be retained more effectively than information that is completely foreign to you. So by associating or grouping new information with old knowledge, you increase your likelihood of remembering it.

3. Use more than one of your senses

We have five senses; sight, sound, touch, taste and feel. The more senses we engage at any given moment the more memorable that moment becomes. This is why actions speak louder than words. When someone tells you something, they're only engaging your sense of sound. When someone does something to or for you,

they're engaging your sense of sight, touch and feeling as well as sound. They may even be engaging your sense of taste depending on the situation. Have you ever heard the popular saying "People will forget what you say but they will never forget how you made them feel". This is because feeling is a powerful experiential based sense.

When you want to remember something, look for ways to stimulate more than one of your senses. For example, if you have a passage of text to memorize, try reading it aloud. Then try reading it while picturing the words in your mind. By engaging both your sense of sound and sense of sight, you increase your chances of remembering the information more quickly. The next time you try to recite the passage you will probably find it easier to recall. Another technique that involves utilizing multiple senses are mnemonic devices.

Mnemonic devices are simple tools and clues that can be used to remember things. You can use visual cues. For example, if you meet a woman named Daisy who has a daisy in her hair, you can remember the flower and the woman with the picture of the daisy. You can also use sentences or acronyms with the first letter of each word being the first letter of something you want to remember.

For example, ROY G. BIV which is the acronym name used to remember the colors in the rainbow. **R**ed, **O**range, **Y**ellow, **G**reen, **B**lue, **I**ndigo, **V**iolet. Or there's **E**very **G**ood **B**oy **D**oes **F**ine to remember the music notes of a treble clef. Another popular mnemonic device is rhyme or song. One of the ways that young kids are taught the alphabet is through the Alphabet Song which is simply a sing song version of the letters of the alphabet. But I can bet that many of you have to sing the alphabet song to remember specific letters even after you're out of pre-school.

4. Focus on basic ideas and concepts

If you have to remember information that is complex and multi-layered, it's best to focus on the basic ideas rather than trying to remember the more complex concepts right away. Most times

really complicated information is simply multiple basic concepts layered over one another. So if you're able to identify and remember the basic concepts, you can then use association to figure out how those basic ideas work together to become the more complex information. Sometimes the best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. Taking large, complex bits of data and breaking it into smaller pieces will definitely make it easier to digest.

5. Relax and take your time

Trying to remember something when you're under stress is never going to be truly effective. You might succeed at memorizing it in the moment but any long term use of that knowledge is going to be virtually nonexistent. Yes, there are some people that can excel in high stress situations but when your body is at a heightened state of physical and mental arousal, what you tend to remember after it has returned to normal is the feeling and the experience, not necessarily the information.

Improving memory is a skill that can be taught and fine-tuned. For those of you who have just decided that you have a bad memory, you probably don't. You just don't use your good memory very effectively. If you take the time to improve your memory, you'll realize that your brain capacity is much greater than you initially thought.

Enhances creativity

The ability to be creative is a skill that everyone possesses whether you believe it or not. Being creative is simply the ability to come up with ideas. Even if you don't have ideas all the time, you do have them. Creativity can be coming up with a slight change to make to a pre-existing concept or it can mean coming up with an idea wholly from scratch. Many people assume that creative people are only those that pursue artistic endeavors like painting, writing, sculpting, designing, but that's not the case. The same type of creativity it takes to create a beautiful sculpture is the same type that it takes to build a computer. The artistic people just express their creativity in an often colorful way. Granted those people tend to have higher levels of creativity but it's often because they actively nurtured that spark throughout the years. Any skill you discover needs to be nurtured and practiced in order for it to

become stronger. If you've ever watched two children play, you will see creativity in motion. You rarely see one child stop and say, "I'm not very creative so you come up with the game." Yes there will inevitably be one child that will control the direction of the game and how it's played but in order for the other child to participate, creative thinking must take place.

Mind mapping is an effective way to enhance creativity. In order to fully flesh out a mind map as it relates to a particular concept, you will have to think creatively.

1. Organize your thoughts

Often we have ideas that pop in our heads but we may not act on them because they may just seem like random thoughts. Sometimes a fleeting thought can turn into the next great invention if you're able to flesh it out properly. Mind maps make it possible for you to work through a simple concept and turn it into something that can be executed.

2. Broaden your ideas

It's possible that your idea isn't a great one or isn't going to be possible to execute but it doesn't mean that the idea is useless. You can extend the idea by considering different elements and breaking it down into smaller parts. A mind map can be very valuable in helping you extend ideas and make them feasible for execution.

3. Whole brain thinking

While most of us are considered either right brain oriented or left brain oriented, it's beneficial to be able to utilize the attributes of both sides of the brain. Because mind maps include pictures, words, colors and shapes, it appeals to both sides of the brain and can stimulate them in tandem. This can go a long way towards expanding any creative notions you may have and turning them into tangible objects.

Creativity is something we can all benefit from whether you want to write the next great American novel or be the best Accountant at your firm. Creative thinking gives us the ability to consider options outside of the status quo and that's definitely a skill worth fine tuning.

More compatible with brain - balances brain

As I said in the previous section about creativity, mind maps include so many different features that it does a great job of stimulating both sides of the brain. People have been most commonly referred to as either right brain oriented or left brain oriented which is usually how we describe which part of their personality is dominant. The right brain deals with cognitive skills and holistic thought. Right brained people tend to be more imaginative, intuitive, artistic and emotional. The right brain also controls the left side of the body so right brained people are very likely to be left handed. On the flip side, the left brain deals with analytic thought. Left brained people tend to be more logical, practical, scientific and rational. The left brain also controls the right side of the body so left brained people are very likely to be right handed.

However, it is possible for people to be able to access both sides of their brain and use them interchangeably. It may take some work to think outside of the realm of what's comfortable. It's very beneficial to be able to access and take advantage of the side of your brain that you don't normally access.

Using mind maps can go a long way towards making it easier for you to think both logically and thoughtfully which can benefit you in both your professional and personal life. The structure of the mind map with its different shapes and colors appeal to your creative nature while the structure of it appeals to your logical side. Just by the virtue of the way it is created, mind maps do a lot towards getting us to use our whole brain.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a very valuable tool when it comes to creating and fleshing out ideas. Most often brainstorming sessions are done by a group of people and are a great way to create a pool of ideas to work from. They're also great for solving specific problems or answering specific questions. A mind map can be drawn while in a group brainstorm session and can really help with getting down ideas in a rapid fire manner. When a group is brainstorming, the ideas can come really quickly and being able to write them down using keywords and linking them together with lines and arrows in shapes. It can even begin to feel a little like a game if you use different colored markers to create the map.

When you're having a solo brainstorming session, it can be tough to generate ideas in the same way since it's all coming from one person. However, a mind map can help to facilitate that thought process and inspire the creation of multiple ideas. There are different types of brainstorming sessions that can be done using mind mapping.

1. Team idea mapping

A group comes together to work on a particular concept. Each member of the group comes up with some ideas individually then each person's ideas are shared for the group to discuss them collectively. A mind map can be drawn illustrating how each idea relates to the central concept. The map will present a visual representation of what the entire group is thinking and can be used to quickly identify ideas that are most appropriate.

2. Individual brainstorming

As stated above, an individual brainstorming session can be done using a mind map as a way to inspire creative thinking in the moment. Some other forms of individual brainstorming are free writing and word association but mind mapping can be a combination of the two. It also makes it easier for the individual to share the brainstorming results with other individuals afterwards.

3. Question brainstorming

Rather than focusing on solutions, sometimes it can be just as effective to focus on questions. Doing a brainstorming session centered on the questions that can be raised is a great way to determine all of the potential problems or challenges that may need to be solved and address them in advance. Using a mind map to organize the questions can help to begin to create a framework for potential solutions because the map will show how each question can link to a singular issue. In a question brainstorming session, it's entirely possible that there might be multiple mind maps.

Brainstorming is a valuable idea creation or ideation tool. It's important to take the time to consider all of the possible options regardless of consequence or outcome in

some situations. The great thing about brainstorming with a mind map is that it helps to facilitate the creative process and get the mental juices flowing but the information is presented in an organized fashion that can be considered and discussed later.

Emphasizes associations

Word associations are very valuable in improving memory and recollection of facts. When we associate new information with information we already know, it makes it easier to incorporate it into our knowledge bank. Word association is a big part of how mind maps are created. Because mind maps require you to use meaningful key words, it's important to be able to associate those words in a way that you can use after you've created the mind map.

Plus it's important to be able to consider all facets of an idea as well as any related ideas. It can be tough to realistically address related ideas and concepts when you're immersed in one particular thought pool. Mind maps can be very valuable in highlighting and emphasizing associated ideas in a way that is visually appealing. This is especially helpful when you're stuck on something and need some inspiration to push through a block or answer a particularly challenging question. Because mind maps are essentially informational pictures, just by looking at one and focusing on the area that you want to solve, you can be struck by inspiration. This isn't always the case when you're looking at a list or even a chart. Not only do mind maps feature important key words, they also feature colors and direct links between concepts.

The different visual cues in a mind map are there to inspire thoughtful consideration while it's being created as well as afterwards. So it stands to reason that even after a mind map has been created it can still continue to inspire creative problem solving.

Simplifies complicated info

Mind maps don't make it possible for you to write long sentences explaining specific concepts. You are only allowed to use key words so essentially it forces you to cull things down to the simplest factor possible. When you're working with complex topics, it's easy to get caught up in the complexity of the situation and spend a lot of time discussing that rather than really focusing on the root of the

concept. Most complex topics are simply a combination of simpler topics layered over one another.

For example, earlier in this book I discussed one of the root ideas that inspired the creation of mind maps, general semantics. Upon first consideration, general semantics is a highly complex concept that would be tough for most people to truly understand. However, if you break it down into the simplest pieces, it's essentially a study of how people receive and share information. It's also a study of how people perceive the information they share and receive. Those are two simple concepts that most people can understand fairly quickly but when those concepts are layered over one another, it becomes much more complex and potentially confusing. If I were to define general semantics as it's explained in Wikipedia, it's much more complicated.

“General semantics is a program begun in the 1920s that seeks to regulate the evaluative operations performed in the human brain.”

What?! If you're not a scientist or a science professional, you probably don't have any idea what general semantics is after reading the above definition. But if you'd taken this concept and drawn a mind map, it would have given you the ability to dissect this concept and make it easier to understand. Usually a complex concept just needs to be carefully dissected with the goal of simplifying it. Mind maps are created to take one concept and break it down into as many pieces as are applicable which can lead to the simplification or expansion of any idea.

Faster to take and review notes

Note taking can be a complicated and overwhelming process, especially if you have to take a lot of notes at one time. One of the challenges of taking notes is reviewing them afterward. I'm sure I'm not the only one who has spent time taking what I thought were amazingly detailed notes only to discover that I can't make sense of them later. Using a mind map to take notes makes it much easier to review them later. In fact, there are some great ways that anyone can use a mind map for note taking but I will address that in a later chapter. The main purpose here is to highlight the value of mind maps in note taking.

Improves learning

This topic is pretty much a no brainer, right? Mind maps can help with brainstorming, simplifying complicated ideas and taking notes. It stands to reason that it improves learning. However, there are some more specific ways this can happen. I'll discuss those in a later chapter and really dive into them.

At least one of these reasons should have resonated with you if not all of them. Mind maps are very valuable tools that can go a long way towards improving how you think and communicate. Not only can mind maps work in situations where you need to retain and organize information, they can also work really well in business. Many of the tasks required to run a business require a lot of planning and processing. Mind maps can be very helpful with this important aspect of owning and running a business. Any time you need to organize information or map out important processes, a mind map can really help with that.

Chapter 3: Elements of a Mind Map

I hope you're excited to get started creating mind maps of your own. I've provided a couple of examples but if you've never done one, even the simplest mind map can be overwhelming. However, once you understand the fundamental elements of a mind map you'll be creating them in no time.

1. Words

The mind map will start with one word, which will be the central concept. Then it will be expanded using other words that relate to the central concept. Make sure these words are simple and don't overwhelm the map. You have to focus on using as few words as possible. The point of the mind map isn't to write a paragraph. The point is to expand a topic in a way that is succinct and easy to understand at a glance.

2. Lines

Lines are the connectors of a mind map. They also help to highlight the words that you are using to expand the central concept. When you write the connecting thoughts, you should put them on one line while connecting them to the central concept using another line.

3. Shapes

Shapes can be used with words or in place of them on the mind map. They are tools that can be used to separate different ideas or group similar ideas together. Look for ways to incorporate shapes into the mind map when possible.

4. Symbols and Images

Because a mind map is a visual tool, it's important to incorporate symbols and images in with the words, shapes and lines. Be creative in how you represent different ideas and concepts.

5. Colors

Make sure you use different colors in your mind map. Colors can be used to group

and highlight ideas and concepts that come while you're creating the mind map. Mind maps are supposed to be multi-colored creations so don't shy away from using color.

When you're creating your mind map you want to do it in a style that is most meaningful to you. While it's important to follow the set structure in order to make it an effective mind map, it's just as important to create it according to your personal preferences. The purpose of the mind map is to analyze information but if you don't understand it when it's finished then the analysis won't happen and the purpose will have been lost. The main thing to keep in mind is to let the mind map go where the creative energy takes it. Don't try to force it into a specific shape. But it is important that you use the different shapes, colors, words and lines with a specific focus. You want to understand what each color, shape, symbol and image mean when you're reading the map later so it's important that the use is clear. Remember that the ultimate goal of a mind map is to analyze a concept thoroughly. Don't make it so convoluted that the ultimate purpose is lost in translation but don't make it so black and white that the visual nature of the mind map isn't fully exploited.

Chapter 4: How to Make a Basic Mind Map

Mind maps are fairly easy to construct logistically. The magic of mind maps lie in the use of them. So I'm going to give you the steps you would use to create a basic mind map. When you're starting out with mind maps and figuring out how to best use them, you should do it in the simplest way possible. If you are very computer savvy and can process new ideas while learning new software, there are some mind mapping software programs you could use. I'll discuss some of those in a later chapter. But if you prefer to put pen to paper, you can create your mind map by hand. Regardless of how you create the mind map, there are some basic steps to keep in mind.

1. Start with a central concept

You want to make sure that you have a firm concept that you will be analyzing with the mind map. Make sure the concept is broad enough that you can flesh out the mind map in a way that is beneficial. However you want to make sure the concept is narrow enough not to cause you to end up with multiple mind maps. You want to dive into one topic and go as deep as you can go without it being muddled with another topic.

2. Write down the different ideas related to the concept

Write down the words that come to mind as they relate to the central concept. Link those words to the central concept using lines and underline the words. Use single words and keep them down to the bare minimum. Use upper and lower case letters to emphasize specific points. Most mind maps are about key words, not phrases or sentences so make the most of those key words. There are some exceptions to this rule that I will discuss later but to start, work on focusing on key words.

3. Use images and symbols in place of words

Whenever possible, use images and symbols instead of words. It's ok if you don't draw. You can use very basic stick figure images or simple symbols. The point is for you to add a visual element to the mind map to communicate a point.

4. Use shapes to group sets of words or images

When you create a set of words or images, you can use shapes to show a

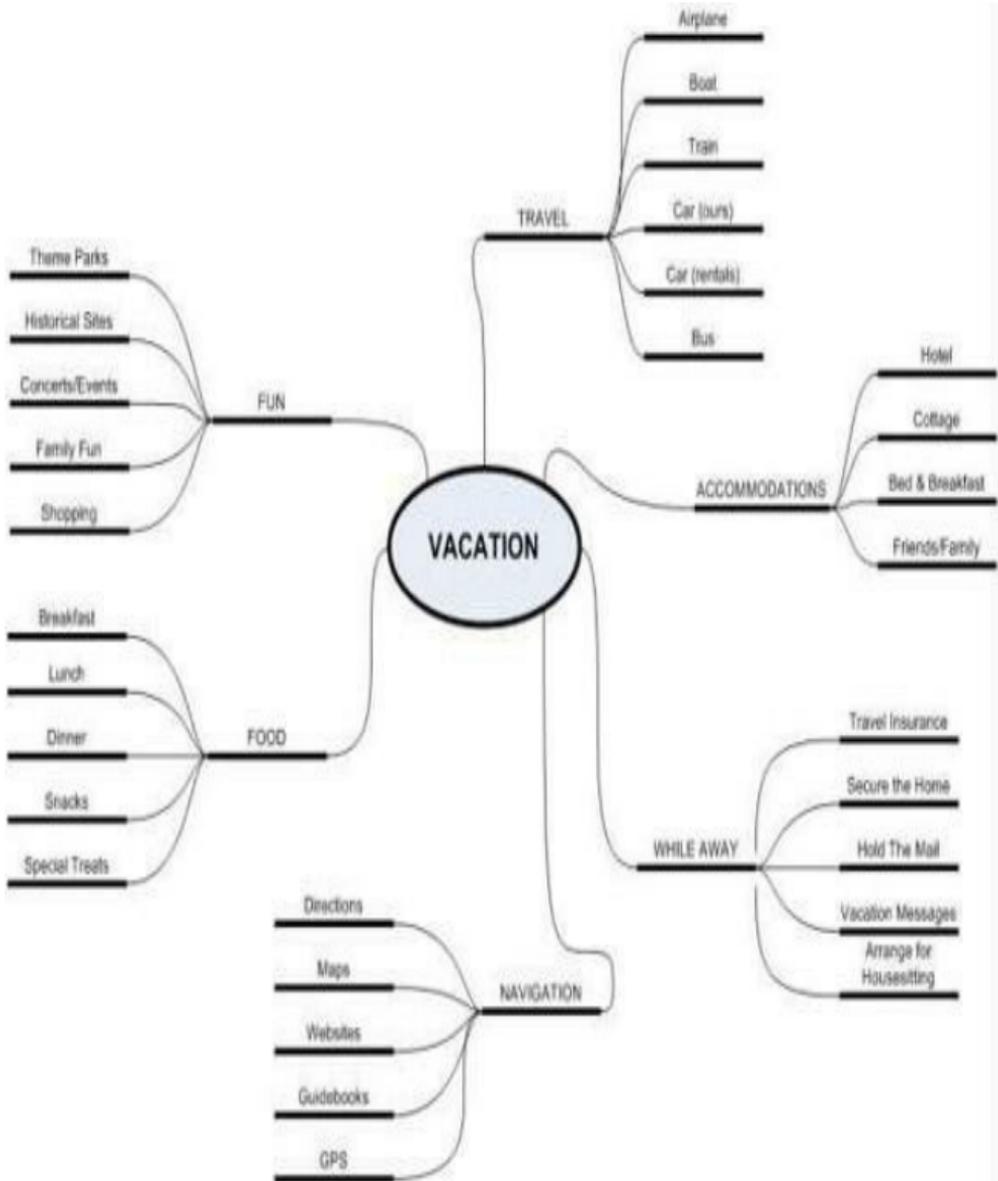
relationship between them. For example, if you're exploring a specific area of the central topic you could put all of those words and images in squares. Then if you're exploring another area, you could put all of those words and images in circles. If you're feeling creative, you could use less standard shapes like stars but the main goal is to give your mind map an interesting look

5. Incorporate colors to show relationships

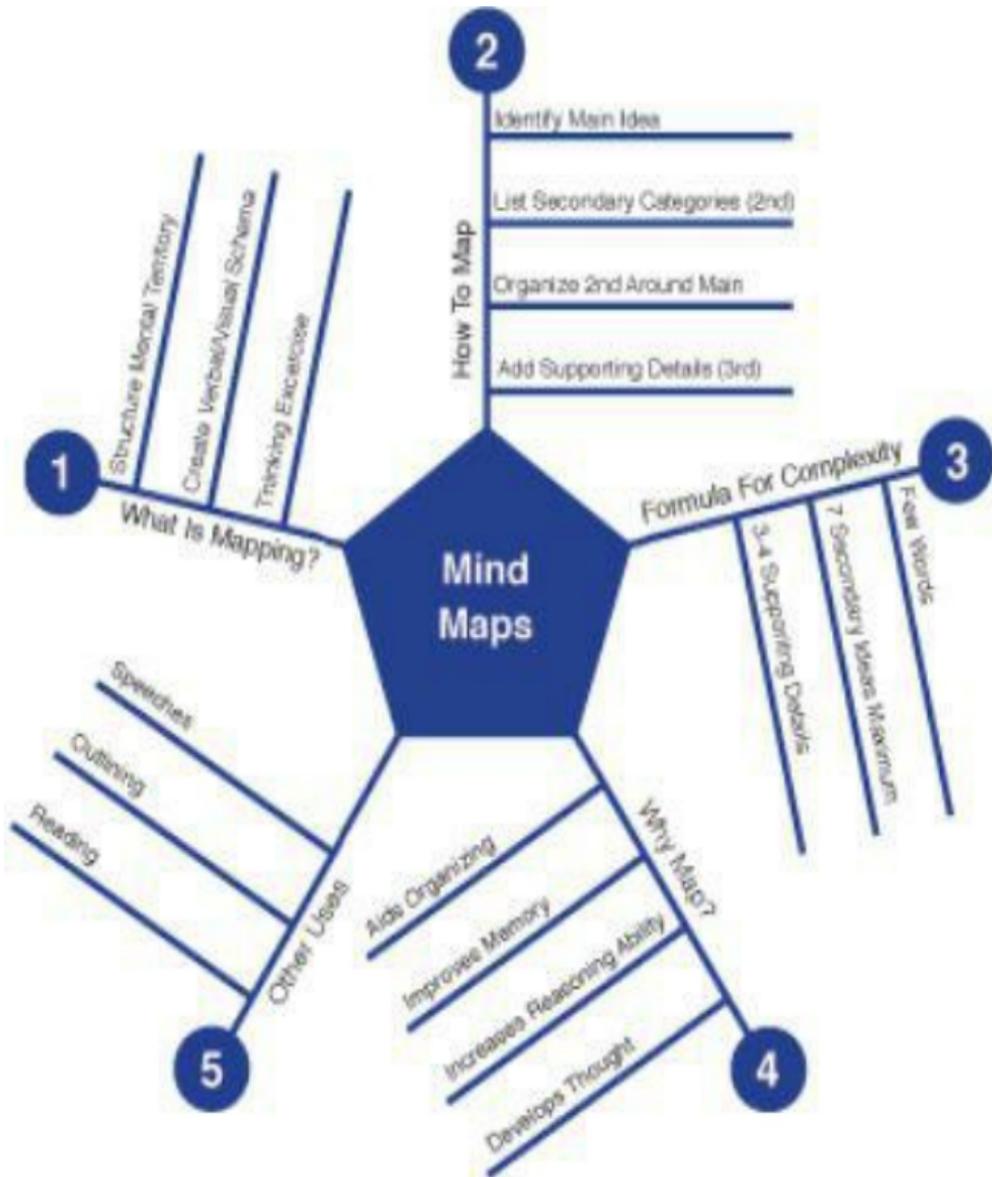
It's important that you use multiple colors in your mind map. You should use a minimum of three colors but look for ways to use more. The colors should be used in addition to shapes, symbols and images not instead of. Be creative with your use of color.

Once you've followed these steps, you're on your way to creating a basic mind map. This will give you the opportunity to get more comfortable using mind maps in the most practical way. The most important thing to remember is that you're not just creating a pretty picture. You're creating a visual example of how your mind processes information as it relates to the central concept.

Below are some examples of basic mind maps.



The mind map in Figure 4-1 is fairly simplistic. It doesn't use a lot of colors or shapes but it still does a great job of fully fleshing out the plan for a vacation. In this form, the mind map is essentially a creative list. But rather than creating six separate lists, this mind map incorporates them all into one document that can be seen at a glance. If this mind map is for a large family vacation, it would be much easier to share it with multiple parties than several different lists.



The mind map in Figure 4-2 is one about mind mapping. It's also very simple, using only one color, a couple of shapes, lines and words. However simplistic it is, the use of short phrases makes it still very easy to understand. Because a mind map is a somewhat complex concept to consider, phrases may be more helpful in fully analyzing them but the phrases are still very short.



The mind map in Figure 4-3 doesn't use any color. It focuses on using lines to outline the different parts of a meeting need to be considered. It's breaking down the different things that need to be considered in a monthly board meeting. This type of mind map is one way to begin introducing them in more corporate environments. Sometimes business people may shy away from things that are too bright and colorful or overly creative. By creating a basic mind map this way, you will be able to take advantage of its benefits while not alienating the people you may have to share it with.

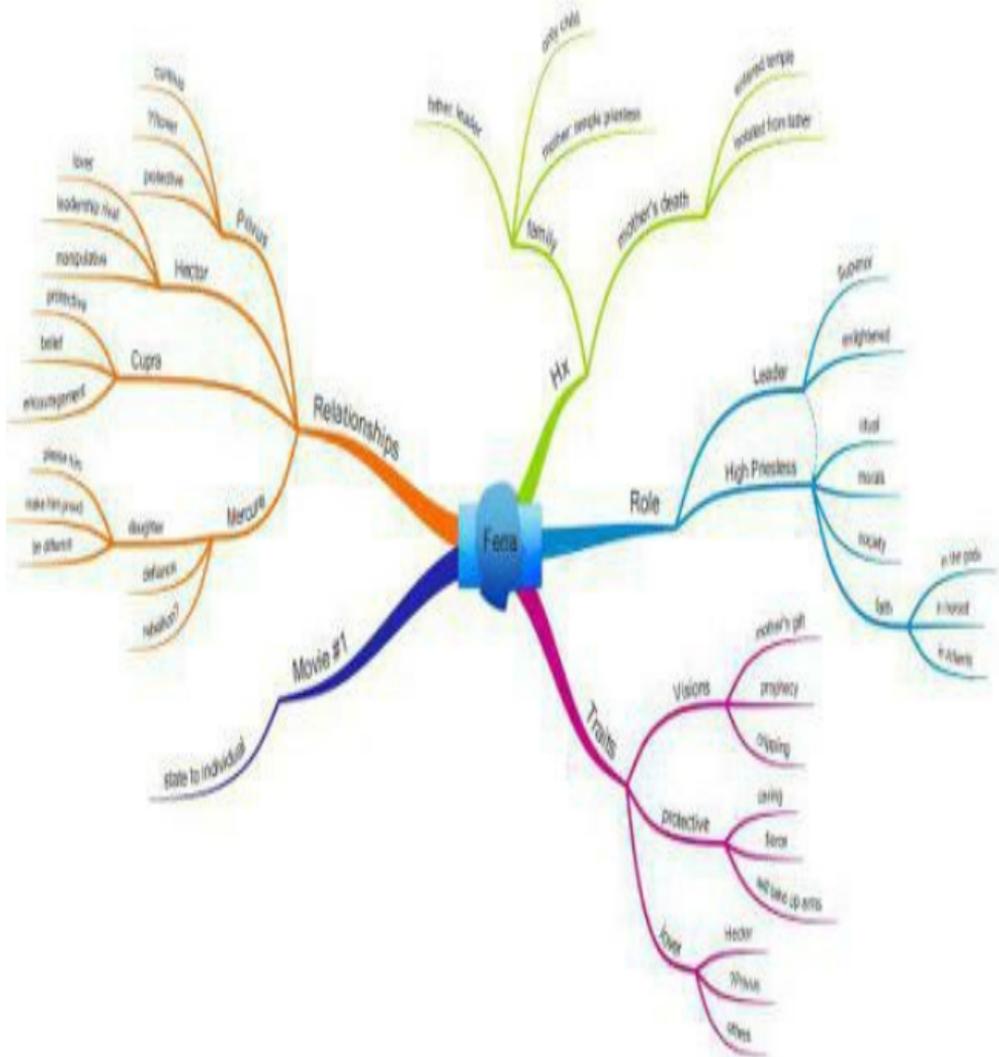


Figure 4-4 Character Development Mind Map

The mind map in Figure 4-4 was created to develop a character that the author is going to be

writing about. While it's much more colorful than the other basic mind maps, it also qualifies as a basic mind map because color is the prevailing tool that is used. The different sections are represented by different color lines and different sizes and caps use in the words. It is possible to have a basic mind map that is colorful but still not overwhelmingly full of detail.

Basic mind maps work best when analyzing a topic with only a few areas the need to be analyzed. For example, if you look at the vacation mind map, you'll notice that it relates to a very specific vacation. It's not a general mind map about vacations overall. This is a great mind map to use when you're planning something very specific. It helps you to work through all of the details as they relate to what you're planning.

When you're doing a basic mind map, it's best not to get to elaborate. Keep the colors down to three or less and keep the graphic elements minimal. You may want to keep the font of your words consistent and focus on using colors and shapes to group topics. However, if you want to get creative with one tool while creating the map don't get creative with many others. For example in Figure 4-4, the creator used color and text formatting as the main areas to be creative with. So in the end, it's still basic but more colorful. This is why basic mind maps are ideal for beginners. You can get used to the structure and how they work in a way that is easy to understand and create.

Chapter 5: How to Make an Advanced Mind Map

In Chapter 4, I discussed how to make a basic mind map that can be used to address more simplistic topics and is also good practice for beginners. At some point you will want to expand your use of the mind map and I wanted to introduce some of the more complex elements you would find in an advanced mind map. Since mind maps can seem advanced and complex for users who don't have a lot of experience with them, I'm going to do a comparison to best highlight the differences.



In Figure 5-1 (which is Figure 4-1 from Chapter 4), this is an example of a basic mind map. It is fairly simple in format and concept. It's been created to plan a vacation and consider the different areas of planning. While it may look fairly complex, in the world of mind maps, it's much more basic.

1. Color

Color is an important element in mind maps but this one is almost completely devoid of color. The only color is in the central concept area and the rest of the map is in black text.

2. Lines

While this mind map does make good use of lines to both connect and highlight the different topics, they're done in a way that is fairly simple to understand. The connecting lines are singular in nature and are the root of the mind map, effectively illustrating the important points of the map.

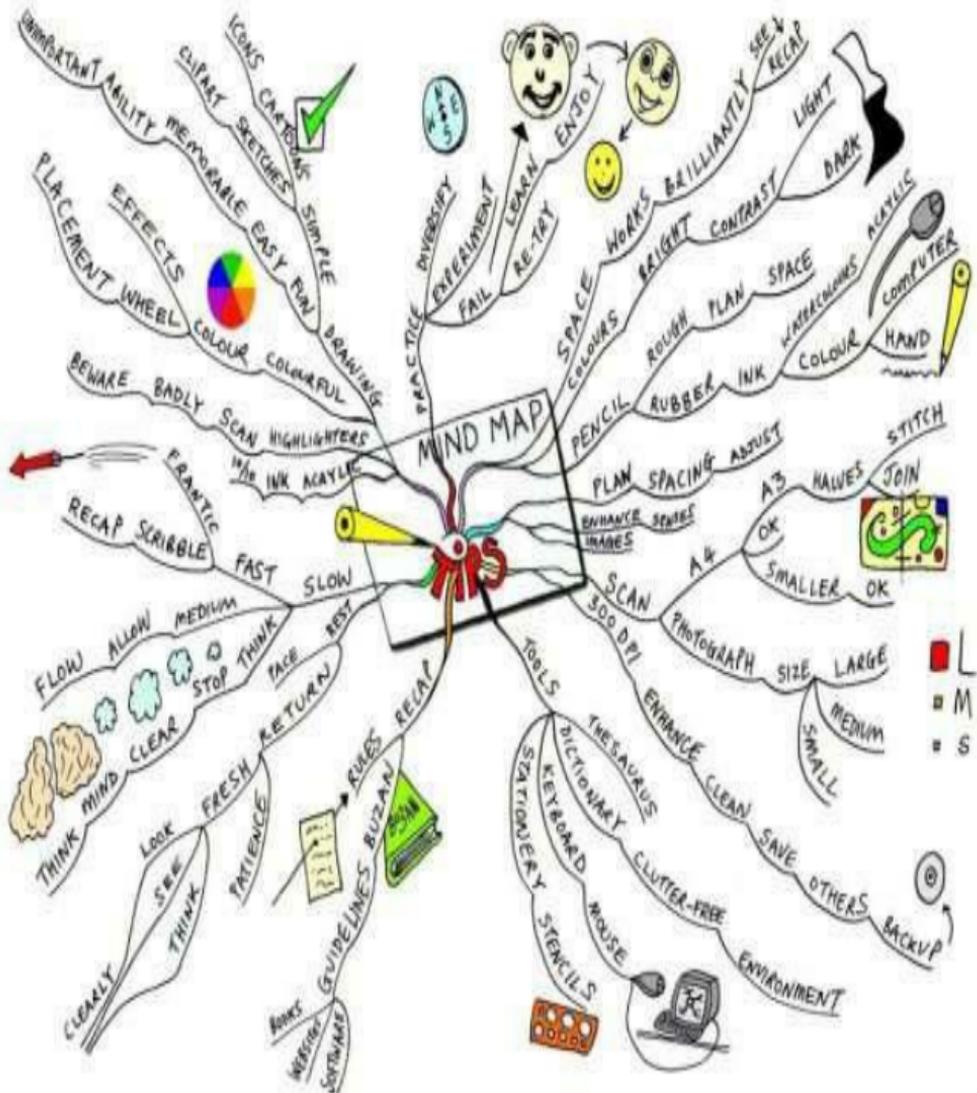
3. Shapes

This mind map has one shape, a circle that is used to highlight the main concept.

4. Words

This mind map uses words in different formats to differentiate between topic headings and sub headings. If you look, you'll notice that the topic headings are in all caps while the sub headings are in initial caps.

Ultimately this mind map in Figure 5-1 has only four elements and they're all used fairly sparingly. The one element that is used in different ways is words which make for a pretty basic mind map. Now let's look at an advanced mind map.



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Figure 5-2 is an example of an advanced mind map and you can easily see the difference between it and the one in Figure 5-1. But the thing to understand is **why** this one is more advanced and **how** the different elements are being used to analyze the topic. If you notice this is another mind map about mind maps. As you begin to gain a better understanding of how mind maps work I wanted it to do double duty. You'll be able to come back to these mind maps and use them as references for content as well as format. But now let's dive into this mind map and discuss what makes it advanced.

1. Color

This mind map is more colorful than the one in Figure 5-1. It has about eleven different colors in it (possibly more if you consider different shades of one color a different color) but each color serves a purpose. Not only does it help to make the mind map more interesting to look at, it highlights different elements of the map and underscores their importance. Before you begin to really analyze or read the mind map, your eye will be drawn to the colored elements. This use of color affects how any given person will interact with the map based on what your eye is drawn to first.

2. Lines

The lines in this mind map are much more complex than in the basic one. Not only are they radiating out from the different topics, they are also used as links between topics and are curved to highlight different terms.

3. Shapes

This mind map doesn't use a lot of shapes but there are a few different ones that are mixed in with the different images. There are also arrows incorporated into the mind map which serve to further highlight specific topics covered.

4. Words

As with other mind maps, this one uses key words to identify different topics while supporting the images, lines and shapes used throughout. The words are consistently all caps.

5. Images

Unlike the basic mind map this one makes use of different images to organize and emphasize different topics.

This advanced mind map covers a lot more topics using the all of the same tools as the basic mind map with one addition. However, it's still fairly easy to understand what the map is communicating to the reader.

More advanced mind maps are necessary when you are analyzing concepts that are more complex and may require instruction or additional insight. With the basic mind map, it's essentially a list maker that makes it possible for you to analyze multiple lists at once. With an advanced mind map, it's more about dissecting a topic and using the links, images, colors and words to simplify the topic.

Below are some additional examples of advanced mind maps.



The mind map in Figure 5-3 is a hand drawn one that makes full use of color, shapes, images, words and lines. As a mind map that analyzes the creativity and imagination, it's definitely very imaginative. In spite of all of the information and creativity included, it's still clear and easy to read. It's important to remember that clarity is most important when creating a mind map no matter how creative it is.

The mind map in Figure 5-4 provides tips on how to deal with stress. It has a LOT of detail and uses images, colors, shapes, lines and words to dissect stress and offer tips on how to manage it. This kind of mind map could easily overwhelm someone new to the concept but as you get more comfortable with it, you'll begin to see the value in this type of map. It provides a lot of valuable information at a glance. If you were to write all of this out using sentences, you would have a multi-page document. In this form it can be very easily shared with a large group of people.

The mind map in Figure 5-5 breaks down a program designed to change a person's behavior. Because this type of program can be very complex and involve many different factors, this mind map is guaranteed to be an advanced one. By using colors, shapes, symbols, images and words, it addresses the different program elements effectively. Much like the mind map in Figure 5-4, if this one were written out using words it would be a multi-page document. However, these types of programs often need to be pitched to multiple people before they can be introduced. By using a mind map, all of the information is presented without being overwhelming. Plus it's much easier to share this with multiple people.

If you look at the above mind maps, you'll notice that they can be used for a wide variety of topics. Mind maps aren't just created for creative or educational pursuits. They can be used to craft new programs and to encourage people to deal with life changes differently. Any topic that you want to work through can be addressed using a mind map. Plus, once you've created it, you can come back to it and continue to build on it. In fact, that is encouraged especially in situations where the mind map is being created by one person.

Chapter 6: Types of Mind Maps

While mind maps can address a variety of topics and can take on a variety of forms, there are two formats that will be used to create them. Either the mind map will be hand drawn or it will be computer generated. Depending on the way your mind processes information best and the amount of time you have, each format has its advantages and disadvantages.

1. Hand drawn mind map

Some mind maps are drawn by hand in the moment. These often happen somewhat on the fly in a class or workshop environment. They can also be drawn more thoughtfully and gradually. The mind map in Figure 5-3 is an example of a hand drawn mind map. These definitely look more artistic than other mind maps but other than that there are some advantages to creating them.

Advantages

1. Low cost

When you want to draw a mind map by hand all you need is a piece of paper and a set of colored pencils or markers. Your hand and your imagination are essentially all you need to get started once you have these tools.

ii. Unique

Anything drawn by hand is automatically an original creation that can't be replicated by anyone else. If this is important to you, then you may prefer drawing your mind maps by hand.

iii. Portable

You can hand draw a mind map anywhere at any time. As long as you have the basic tools and your brain, you're able to draw one.

iv. Stylized

Your mind map can look like anything you want it to when you're drawing it by hand. You can insert your own level of style into the mind map and there are no restrictions on how it will look.

Hand drawn mind maps are most attractive to the people who enjoy the more tactile approach that putting pen to paper allows. It can make you feel very productive to create a hand drawn mind map and that feeling can be exhilarating and inspiring. However, not everyone prefers to hand draw mind maps. There are some disadvantages to creating mind maps by hand.

Disadvantages

1. Cannot be digitally stored or shared unless scanned

If you don't own a scanner, it will be tough to share a hand drawn mind map. You could make copies of it but if it's in color, the copies may not have the same look as the original.

ii. Size is limited

It would be tough to create a really large hand drawn mind map. While it's not impossible, it is challenging and could take a really long time to create.

iii. Tough to edit

Once you've created your hand drawn mind map, you can't easily make changes to it without possibly altering the entire structure of it.

2. Computer generated mind map

For those people who want to create mind maps but don't feel artistically inclined enough to draw one by hand, there are computer programs that you can use to create them as well. There are a variety of different programs, both free and paid that I will share later. But first, let's discuss the advantages and disadvantages of computer generated mind maps.

Advantages

1. Easy to arrange and re-arrange

You can create a computer generated mind map and it's very easy to move things around as you see fit. This increased flexibility makes computer generated mind maps great for those people who may need to change things around at a later date but not want to create a new mind map.

ii. Can include embedded documents, images and other files

Sometimes your mind map may reference specific documents and it would be helpful to be able to embed those documents in the map. Computer generated mind maps make it possible to expand on them with links, documents and other information that turns it into a database as well as a mind map.

iii. Shared collaboration

You may need to collaborate on a mind map with others who can't be in the same room as you and a computer program is the only way the mind map will be created. This can be very valuable for individuals who don't have the luxury of an in person meeting but still need to accomplish a shared task.

iv. Ability to share with relative ease

Since this mind map is already on the computer, it's much easier to share it with others via email or a file sharing service.

v. Can be incorporated into other software programs

If you have a mind map that you'd like to include within a presentation or larger document, a computer generated one can be fairly easily imported into the document.

vi. Presentation friendly

Because the mind map is computer generated, it can be a really unique way to present an idea or a series of ideas to a group using a projector or other presentation tool. Most people do presentations using programs like Powerpoint or Keynote so a presentation using a mind map would really stand out.

Computer generated mind maps are great for people who prefer working with a keyboard and a mouse. They allow for some flexibility in thought when creating them, which can be beneficial for those people whose brainstorming process can go through multiple layers. But there are some disadvantages to computer generated mind maps.

Disadvantages

1. Cost

While there are free mind mapping software programs available, the more robust ones will cost a fee to use. This can be a challenge, especially for someone who has a tight budget and can't afford to invest in the software.

ii. Tough to personalize

Since you're using a computer to create the mind map, it can be an added challenge to put your personal touch on it.

iii. Software learning curve

As with all new software programs there is a learning curve with mind mapping software programs. Some people don't do so well with learning how to use new software and may be discouraged from creating mind maps this way.

iv. Requires access to a computer

You have to use a computer to use mind mapping software programs. It's impossible to create one without a computer and that can be a challenge for some people. Any time something requires people be able to use a computer, it brings up other questions about accessibility and who can truly afford it. Even if you can afford the

software, if you can't gain access to a computer it's not going to be possible to create the mind maps.

As you may have noticed the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages in both hand drawn and computer generated mind maps. Ultimately it comes down to preference and access. If you don't have immediate access to a computer with mind mapping software on it then you don't have a choice but to create them by hand. However, there are benefits to both. The most important thing to keep in mind is that ultimately, the benefits of creating mind maps in general are much stronger than the negatives. Regardless if you prefer to write it by hand, use a computer program or do a combination of both, you should start using mind maps.

As I mentioned before there are some software programs that will help you create a mind map using a computer. Below are a few of the more popular ones.

Mind Map Software Programs

[ConceptDraw](#)

This is a great mind mapping software that, as you know, is giving you a free year's trial to use.

This is my personal favorite.

To get your copy, just sign up at LearningWithMindmaps.com and I'll get you all the details.

[FreeMind](#)

This is a free mind mapping software program that can simply be downloaded and used. It's what's called open source software. When something is open source that means that it is free to use and the information used to create and build it is also readily available.

This has pros and cons for users. The pros are that it's free and has a lot of different information out there about it. There are going to be many different forums and helpful information shared about this software. The cons are that the features may be limited and upgrades could either happen a lot or not at all. When the development community finds an open source software that they like they tend to put a lot of effort into making the software perform well. While this can be a good thing, it can also be a bad thing because when a software is constantly being updated it requires that users of the software be diligent in keeping up with those updates. Most average software users aren't naturally diligent about updates which can cause problems in how it runs.

Ultimately, it's great to have a free open in mind mapping software and this can definitely lower the cost barriers to entry for new users.

Mindmeister

Mindmeister is a mind mapping software that is online based. It's not completely free to use but it does have a free trial then afterwards, it's as inexpensive as \$4.99 a month for individuals. This online based software is good because it also has a mobile app that can be used on mobile devices. You can sync your online mind map to your mobile device and build on your map while on the go. This is very valuable as more people have to make decisions while moving.

iMindMap

Tony Buzan is the creator of the mind map and he has also created a software called iMindMap. It has a desktop computer version as well as online and mobile versions that make it very versatile. Plus, it has an option to create your mind map in 3D. It's not free to use but there is a free trial before you have to pay a fee for it. The lowest cost version is the online/mobile version which starts at \$20.99 a month. If you want to buy the software for personal or education use, it starts at \$85 for one user.

This program could be considered expensive for a mind map newbie but as you get more acclimated to using them, it might be beneficial to make the investment. As the software that's affiliated with the person that invented them iMindMap will definitely be very robust and come with a lot of support.

Xmind

Xmind is a free mind mapping software that also has paid options. The free version allows you to create your mind maps and share them online. If you want the ability to share your mind map via email or a file sharing service, you'll have to upgrade it to the plus or pro versions which start at \$79. There is a subscription service that costs \$79 a month that gives you access to the pro features at a lower cost.

There are many other mind mapping software programs but these are some of the more popular ones. In spite of the cost, it's definitely a good idea to look for programs that are actively being used by many people. This way you can rest assured that your program will be consistently maintained and updated regularly. While too many updates can be disruptive, it's important that the software isn't allowed to become stagnant. Since operating systems and computers change regularly, software programs have to upgrade to keep up with them for good functionality.

Mind Map Formats

While mind maps can be divided into two distinct categories when it comes to how they're created, they can be divided into three distinct categories when it comes to the format and purpose of the map.

Reference or Knowledge Mind Map

Some mind maps are created with the purpose of exploring a topic or organizing a specific group of information. The idea of reference or knowledge mind maps is to be able to come back to them later for information. Essentially these mind maps are created to be used for future reference. Once created, these types of mind maps can be used by different people for many years. They can be created to cover certain topics, manage lists, organize resources and facilitate learning.

Brainstorming Mind Maps

When a group is working together to solve a problem, answer a question or prepare for different scenarios a mind map is a great tool for identifying those ideas. A mind map can be drawn during the brainstorming session and act as a living reference while the group works. Since mind maps are created to be enhanced or changed at will, it can be an important tool to inspire creative thinking. One of the most important benefits of brainstorming is the creative energy that is encouraged from the participants. A mind map is very effective at facilitating that creativity while remaining organized.

Planning/Project Mind Maps

If you're planning an event or special outing, a mind map can be very helpful in working to cover all of the different details that need to be considered and fleshed out. The map would have the project at the center and the different areas would tackle different parts of the project. This kind of map could be used on an ongoing basis to track milestones, communicate goals and keep a planning schedule.

By determining the type of mind map you will be using, it can help you make the best use of it. When you're doing any type of analysis, you have to be clear about your purpose when creating it. With mind maps, you must first determine whether it's going to be hand drawn or computer generated then whether it's a reference, brainstorming or planning map. Often times the situation will help to dictate the type of map being created but overall it helps to figure this out before you

start it.

Chapter 7: Mind Mapping Your Day

We have busy lives. Not only are our lives filled with daily activities like working and going to school they're also filled with much more activities than ever before. 1 in 3 working professionals work more than 50 hours a week which doesn't leave much time for other daily activities like exercise, leisure, chores and other things that might come up throughout the day. Mind maps can be used to organize your daily activities and there are many benefits to doing so.

1. Better recollection of daily tasks

How often do you get home from work only to realize you forgot to do something you really needed to do on the way home? Even if you are diligent at making to do lists, often those lists can seem to go on forever and things can be missed. Mind maps are created so that you can see everything on it in one glance. By using colors to highlight the most important things on your list combined with meaningful keywords, you will be better able to recall them when necessary.

2. Quick prioritization of tasks

If you have a lot of tasks to tackle at one given time it's easy to become overwhelmed when you're staring at a page long list. Because you can use colors and lines to highlight different tasks within a mind map, it's possible to determine priority based on what's most pressing. You can simply take a glance at the mind map and see what's most important and focus on those tasks first.

3. Introduce new habits

Eating more healthy food, working out and getting more sleep are three things that everyone needs to work on doing better and more often. You can use a mind map to help you develop new habits by scheduling it in your day as well as highlighting the benefits of doing so. You can also create a routine where you schedule rewards for making specific goals. Here's an example of a habit focused mind map to give you an idea of what one would look like courtesy of the website Asian Efficiency.



Figure 7-1

4. Increased productivity

Task lists are great at increasing overall productivity but mind maps can be even better. One of the downsides to task lists is that they're often written using long phrases or sentences. This can make it tough to manage them effectively, especially if you have a lot of tasks to accomplish. And who hasn't had a task list that was more than one page long? Since mind maps use keywords and associations, it's designed to tap into your memory effectively. Plus, having the ability to see all of your tasks in one visually stimulating plan makes it easier to review it all in a much more meaningful way.

Below are some samples of mind maps used for daily planning to help you get started using them outside of work or project related tasks.

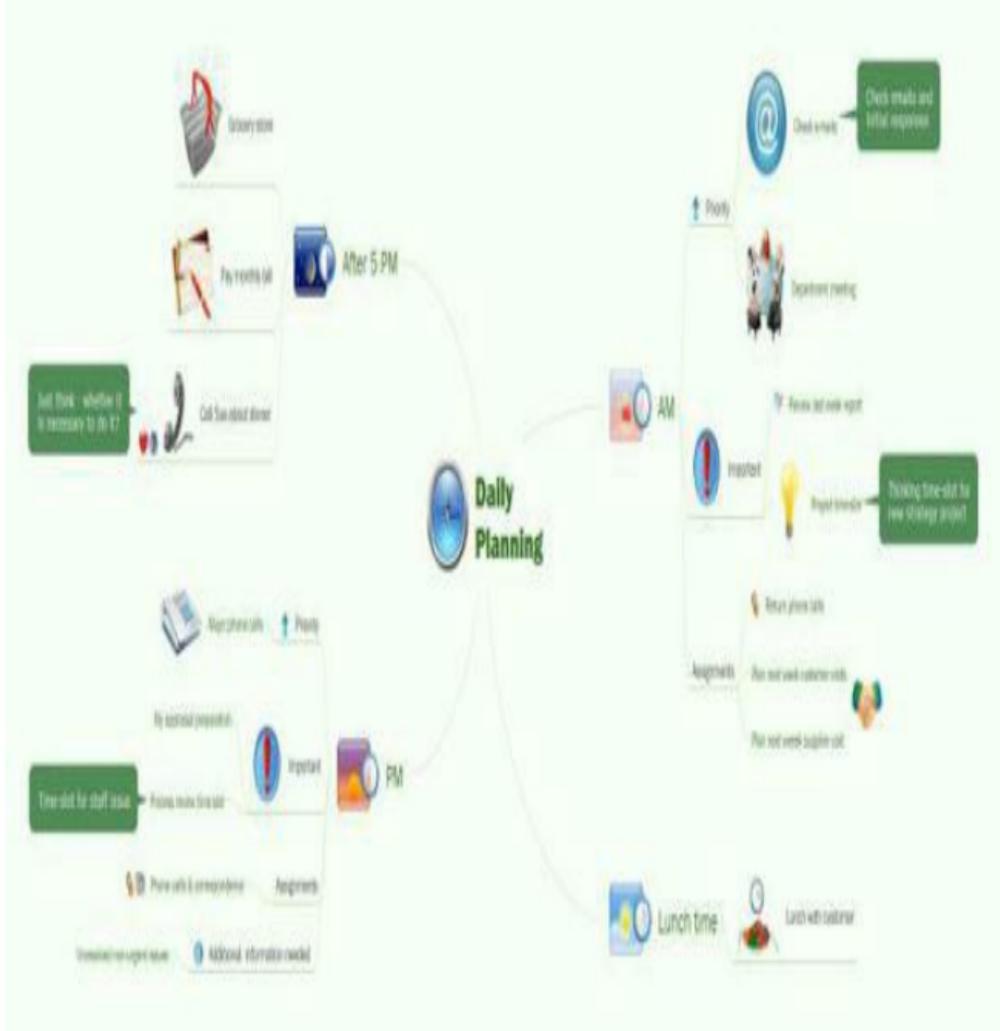


Figure 7-2

The mind map in Figure 7-1 outlines a daily plan from morning to night. Some people need to schedule their entire day to ensure they stay on track. This mind map shows how it can be done with relative ease.



Figure 7-3

The mind map in Figure 7-3 is a much broader one. It outlines what needs to be done but doesn't assign a timeframe to each one. It's not very detailed but these key words are sufficient for the creator in considering what needs to be accomplished on this particular day.



Figure 7-4

The mind map in Figure 7-4 shows how a to do list can be transferred to a mind map. It addresses a few different projects that need to be tackled and goes into specific detail about those projects. This mind map may be for one day but it's most likely for multiple days.



Figure 7-5

The mind map in Figure 7-5 is another one with a specific to do list, including check boxes. If you need to check things off, it is possible to incorporate those boxes into your mind map and check them off as you complete the tasks.

As you can see a mind map of a to do list can look many different ways and be used for everything from daily planning as it pertains to working to daily planning from the time you wake up until the time you go to bed. Mind maps are so flexible you can use them in any way that best fits your lifestyle.

Chapter 8: Mind Maps for Studying and Note Taking

Going to school isn't easy. It's not meant to be easy especially if you're pursuing a degree. You are often juggling multiple classes about different topics that require the same level of attention and focus. It can be challenging to receive and effectively process the information required to excel in your classes. Mind maps can be very helpful in streamlining the note taking process during class and the study process after class.

Have you ever missed something important because you were trying to write something down that the teacher or professor just said?

It can be annoying to take notes long hand and not very many people do well with using short hand. However, if you begin to use mind maps when taking notes, you'll be able to quickly receive and write down information.

Incorporating mind maps while taking notes or studying is effective in several ways.

1. Improves comprehension

While it taking notes with a mind map may take some getting used to once you begin to tap into the different ways your mind works and how to translate that onto paper, you will find yourself comprehending information much more effectively. Because mind maps incorporate images and word association they automatically cause the map creator to access current knowledge to attach to the new information being received. As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the ways to improve memory and recollection of information is through association and grouping of new facts with old ones. Mind maps naturally facilitate that type of thinking which means new information is comprehended much quicker and more effectively.

2. Increases note taking speed

When you're taking notes long hand, it requires you to take focus off of what the teacher or speaker is saying to focus on the note you're taking. This can cause you to miss important information being shared while you're writing. It can be very frustrating to take notes this way which is

why some people start recording lectures and talks with a lot of important information. While this is one way to solve the problem it can come with its own set of problems, namely doing twice as much work.

Once you are home and ready to study the information, you have to transcribe the recording or go back through and listen to it multiple times to take notes. That can be tough to do if you're taking multiple classes or only have a short amount of time to study. Mind maps can cut all of that out without sacrificing information intake. Through the use of key words, shapes and colors you can quickly take in what's being shared and organize it in a way that's meaningful for you. This way you can come back to it later and understand what you meant to note.

3. Organizes your thoughts

Often when you're sitting in a lecture or a class, the person speaking will share a lot of information and words but not all of it should be written down or remembered. Most of what is shared is to explain specific concepts or relate it to the class. There are some people who speak in outlines or lists and clearly state the point to be discussed before discussing it. Those people make it really easy to take notes from their lectures. Unfortunately those types of people aren't very commonplace and you will find yourself listening to talks or lessons that are much less clear.

It's important to be able to decipher what you need to know from what's simply supportive dialogue. When you're receiving a lot of information in this way it can be tough to organize your thoughts accordingly. Mind maps are great at helping you organize the information you're receiving so that you can retain it in the moment and study it later.

I realize that with classes and studying, sometimes the information you need is in a book. Yes mind maps are great for receiving information verbally but it's also a good tool for studying written material as well.

Performing Book Research

When you're reading a book or a chapter, you may need to take notes on the information. It can

be tough to take good notes when you're reading a lot of words that all seem important. There are some tools you can use to develop a mind map for taking notes when reading a book, article or other written document.

1. Brainstorm

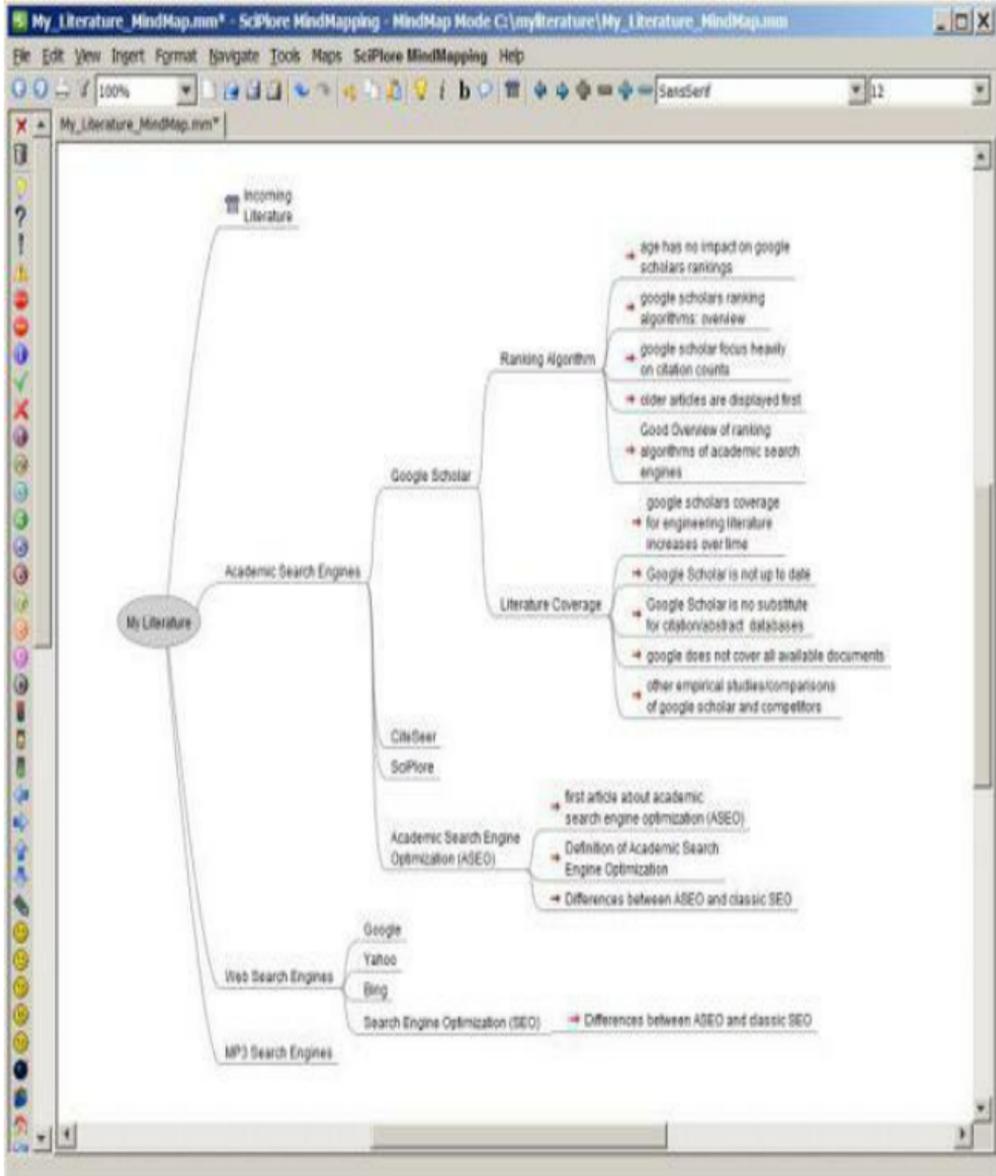
Before you start reading, take some time to consider what you may already know. Create a mind map with the topic you're studying in the center. Make one arm a list of things you do know about the topic and another arm a list of things you don't know or questions you need answered. This can be your outline for reading and as you review the text you can focus on the things you don't know or get answers to your questions.

2. Visual outline

When you got the book or books that you're using for research, you should have gotten them for a specific purpose. Whether you're writing a paper, book, article or report, you should have some specific needs to fill with your book research. Make a list of what you need to get and turn that list into a mind map. Start with your main topic as the center of the mind map and create branches with keywords of the topics in your list. Then when you're reading the book, you have a framework to work from and can focus on that information specifically.

The key to using a mind map for book research is not to overthink it or over plan. Allow the information to come naturally and read the information with an open mind. If you over plan, you run the risk of making the mind map much more complicated than it needs to be and reducing its effectiveness.

Below is a sample mind map that was used while doing book research.



While it's a bit more wordy than some of the previously featured mind maps, Figure 8-1 is an example of one that was used to write a thesis, which requires a lot of research and data organization. This is a much more serious looking mind map but you could create a more colorful one and still incorporate images and shapes with the words and lines.

Create a bookoverview

Have you ever read a novel or book that you wanted to tell someone about but couldn't remember many details? This could apply to casual reading books or something you've read for class. You can use a mind map to write an overview of a book and use that overview to discuss or present the book later. Using the different steps discussed previously in the book, you would put the book title in the center of the map. Then you would create the different arms of the map using either the characters or major themes discussed in the book. You can organize it in any way that works best for you or any way that helps you to discuss it later.

Below are some examples of mind maps used to review a book.



The mind map in Figure 8-2 is a review of the book *Kitchen Literacy*. It's a good example of the need to incorporate longer key phrases over key words but it's still not overly detailed. The phrases aren't full sentences and still require word association be done to remember what's being analyzed in the mind map. However, this gives you a breakdown of the book at a glance and will help you in recalling the information later.

The mind map in Figure 8-3 is a synopsis of the Shakespeare play, Hamlet. Hamlet is a very complex piece of literature because there are so many different things happening at once. Plus the book is written in a form of English from a time that has passed us by. People no longer speak this way and it can be a tough read. This synopsis does a good job of clarifying what's important and can be helpful when reading it.

As you can see a mind map of a book review can be fairly simple like Figure 8-2 or much more complex and in depth like Figure 8-3. It definitely makes sense that Figure 8-3 is the synopsis of a Shakespeare play. Those tend to be very multi-layered and have several small plots revolving around a larger plot. While Figure 8-3 could be overwhelming to some, it definitely helps to see the different elements of the play in this format and in non-Shakespearean English.

Repeat what you've learned

There are many instances where you will receive a lot of information and have to repeat that information in the form of a presentation, paper or speech. Some people are very skilled at receiving information and sharing it but most of us aren't. We may forget large chunks of important information or switch facts around or insert information that we got from somewhere else. It can be tough to work with the context of information when someone has given it to you in a way that works best for them. We have to remember that when we're listening to lectures or reading books, the information has been organized in a way that makes the most sense to the speaker or author. Yes, the information is being shared in a logical manner which is why you can understand it and receive it in the moment but you won't necessarily remember everything that's been shared with you. You will typically remember the information that is most meaningful to you in that moment and will forget the rest.

Mind maps can help you pull out even more information by making it meaningful and memorable in a way that works best for you. When you're creating a mind map, you're in control of how the information is being digested and recorded. So even if you're receiving information that has been organized by another person, you can use the mind map to organize it in a way that you can then turn around and share it yourself. Mind maps are great tools that make it easier to take in information, get acquainted with it and repeat it to others in a way that's clear.

Below are some examples of mind maps used to create presentations and write speeches.

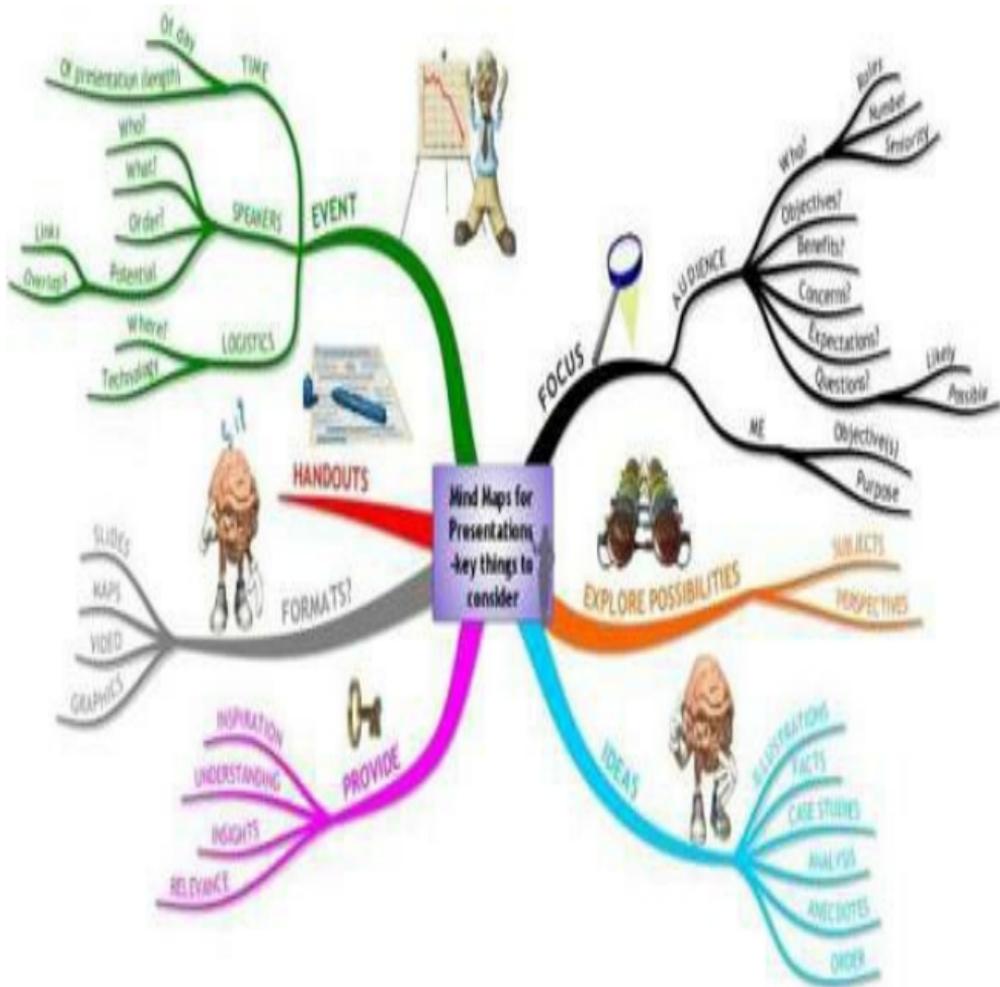


Figure 8-4 Presentation Mind Map

The mind map in Figure 8-4 was created to plan out how a presentation would be put together. It's more of an outline on how to do presentations but it definitely provides some detail to consider.

The mind map in Figure 8-5 is for a presentation of financial statements. This is a great way to show how a decidedly uncreative topic can still be addressed using a mind map. Presenting financial statements can require a lot of information be kept in mind and this is a good way to do that.



Figure 8-6 Speech Mind Map

The mind map in Figure 8-6 was used to map out a speech that was given by Tony Buzan for a TEDx conference. He discussed the power of a mind map and had used one to craft the speech.

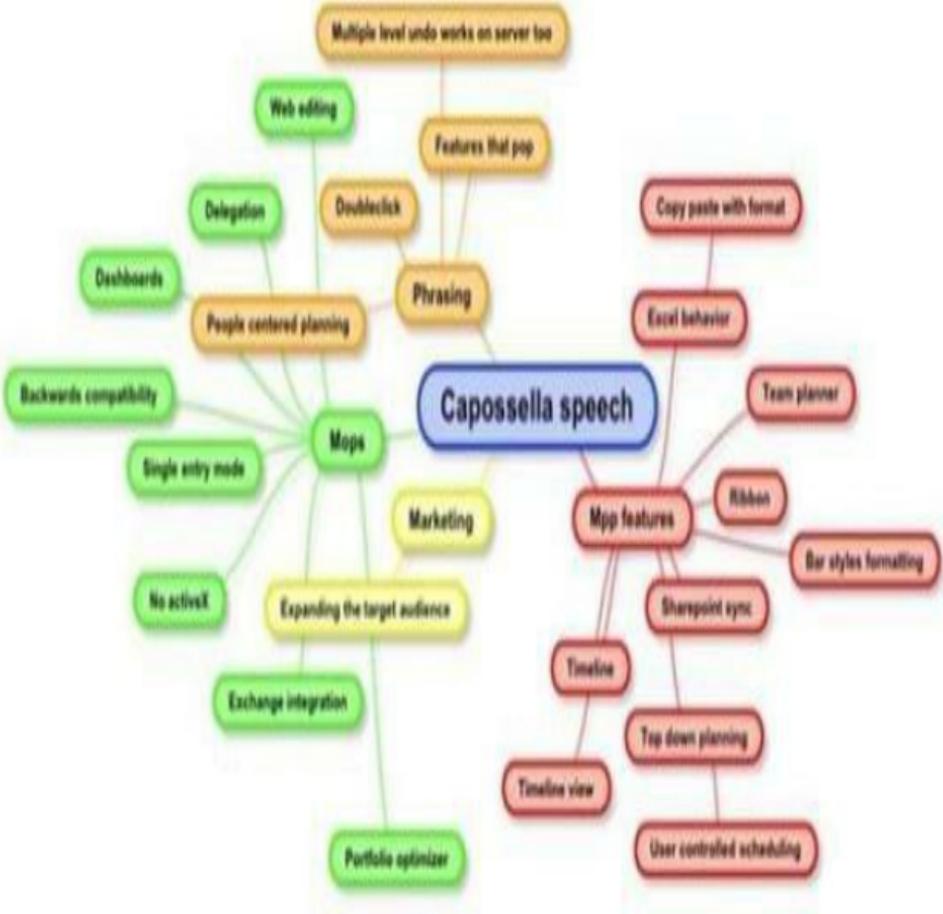


Figure 8-7 Keynote Mind Map

The mind map in Figure 8-7 was done during a keynote given by Chris Capossella during a Microsoft Project conference in 2009. It shows how a someone can take notes during a speech and get more of the important information in one place with relative ease.

Below are some mind maps that were created during a note taking session to give you some idea of how that type of mind map could look

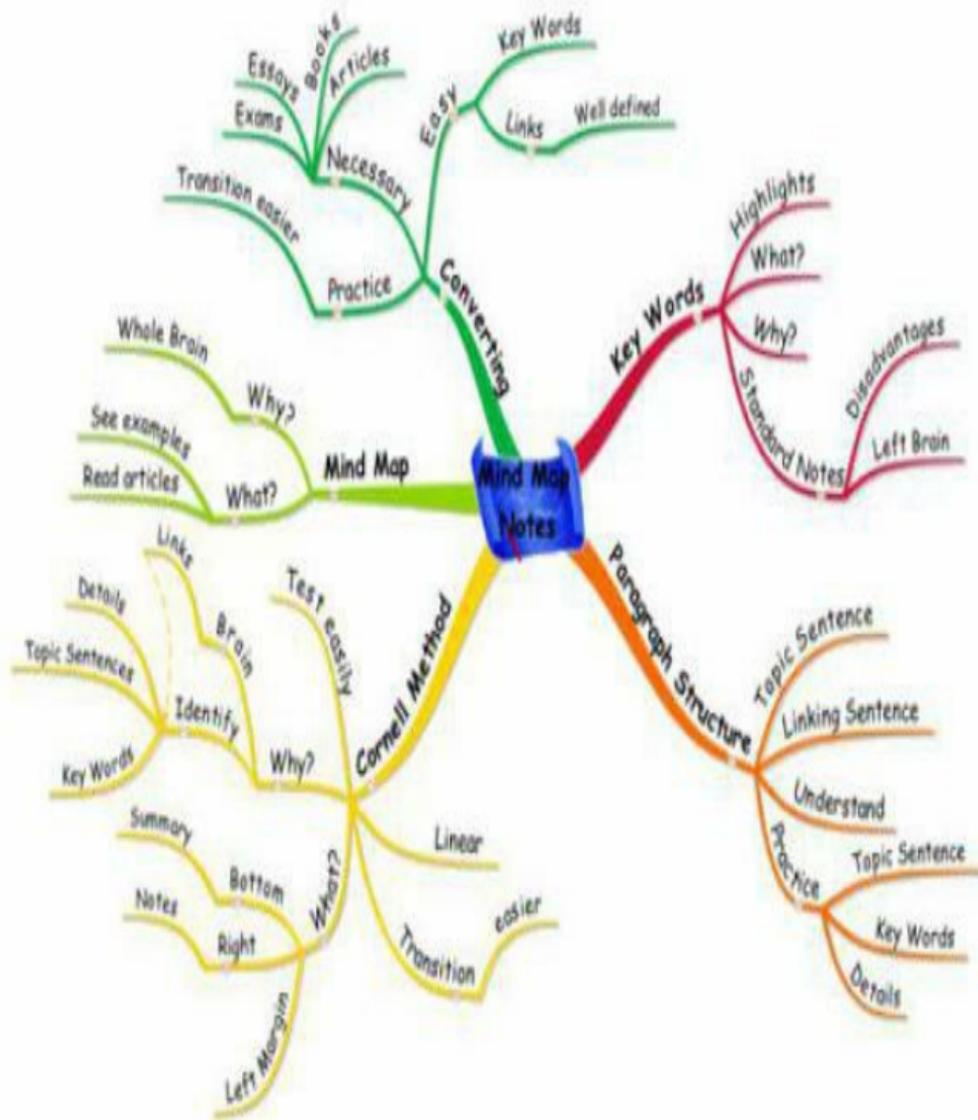


Figure 8-8 is a mind map that analyzes notes taken about mind maps. It dissects how mind maps were presented and the different areas discussed.

Design tips

44% increase
of click through

Click Here!

"Click Here!" words

Use Bold Colours

Colours

Animate banners

Animation

Each frame 3 sec. max
(except for the last frame)

Use Antialiasing for better looks

Text

Break text into
several frames

Must take
less than 2 sec.
to read

Big Fonts

Less Words

Size Matters!!!

10 - 15
KB max

Banner Ads

Maintanace Tips

1 Change often

Change banners every 2-3
weeks - or after each 20-30K
impressions on bigger site

Place wisely

2 Choose targeted sites

3 Solution-oriented pages

4 Use search engines
(keywords, categories)

5 Site Spans or ship deals

Figure 8-9 Banner Ads Mind Map

The mind map in Figure 8-9 is a collection of notes on banner ads and how to use them based on

the different types that exist.

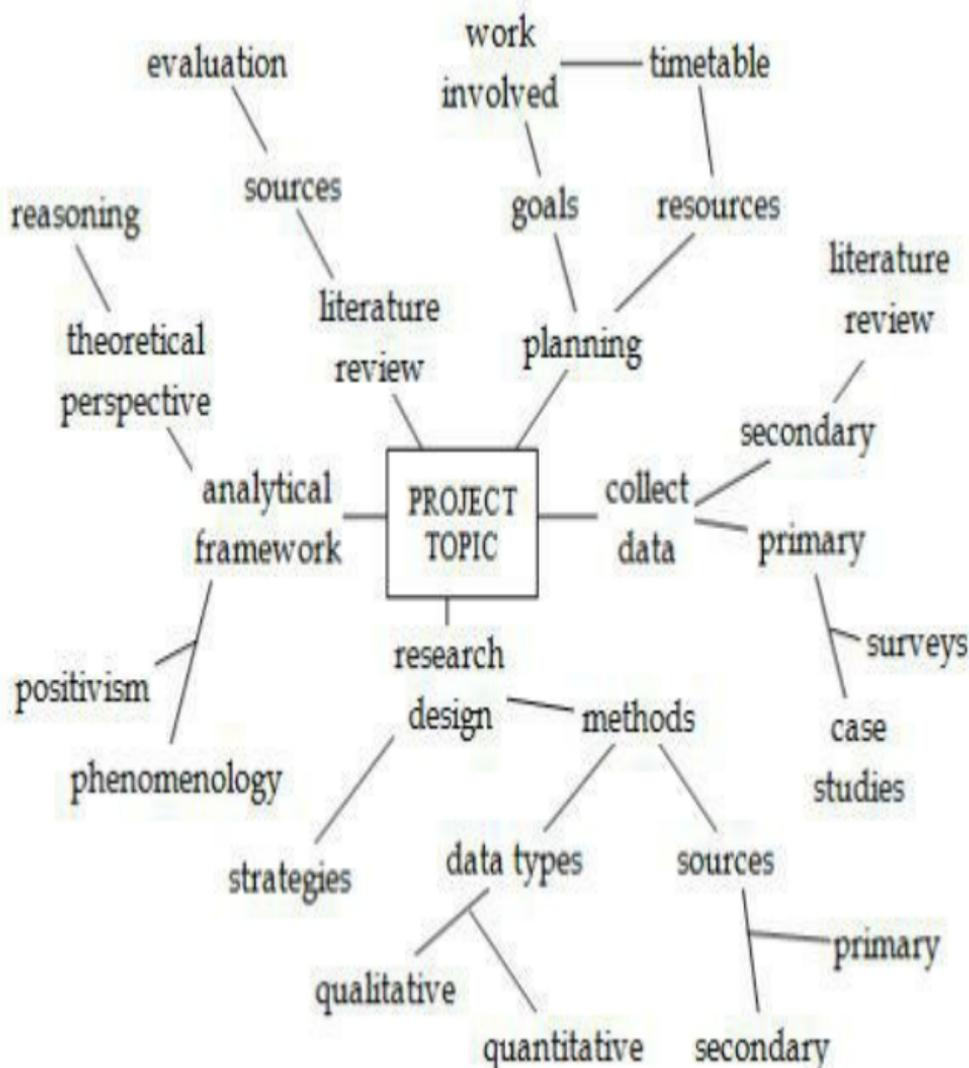


Figure 8-10 Approaches to Note Taking Mind Map

The mind map in Figure 8-10 is one that analyzes different approaches to note taking and can be doubly informative. Not only does it provide some insight into how a note taking mind map but it analyzes different ways to actually take notes. Notice how mind maps can easily play double duty!

Chapter 9: Mind Maps for Reading and Writing

Most of the mind map techniques that have been covered have been as it relates to analyzing information or planning something. Mind maps can also be used to help with reading as well as writing something from scratch. Many people use outlines to prepare to write or just dive in and begin writing. The same goes for reading. Most of us don't do any prep work before we start reading something. We just start reading and go from there. But mind maps can be valuable tools to make us better writers and more effective readers.

Mind Maps for Reading

When you're about to tackle a reading project that might involve a lot of complex information or a lot of information that you have to retain for future use, you should use a mind map to organize that information. Here are some steps to use to make the most of a mind map while reading.

1. Start the mind map with the title of the book in the center

This will be a mind map of the entire book and will most likely address multiple topics as you go through the book so it's best to start with the book title over a central idea or topic.

2. Create direct links to the main topics discussed in the book or the book chapters
Keep it as easy as possible and make sure you do this before you start reading the book
3. Go through and write any questions that you think of in each chapter section

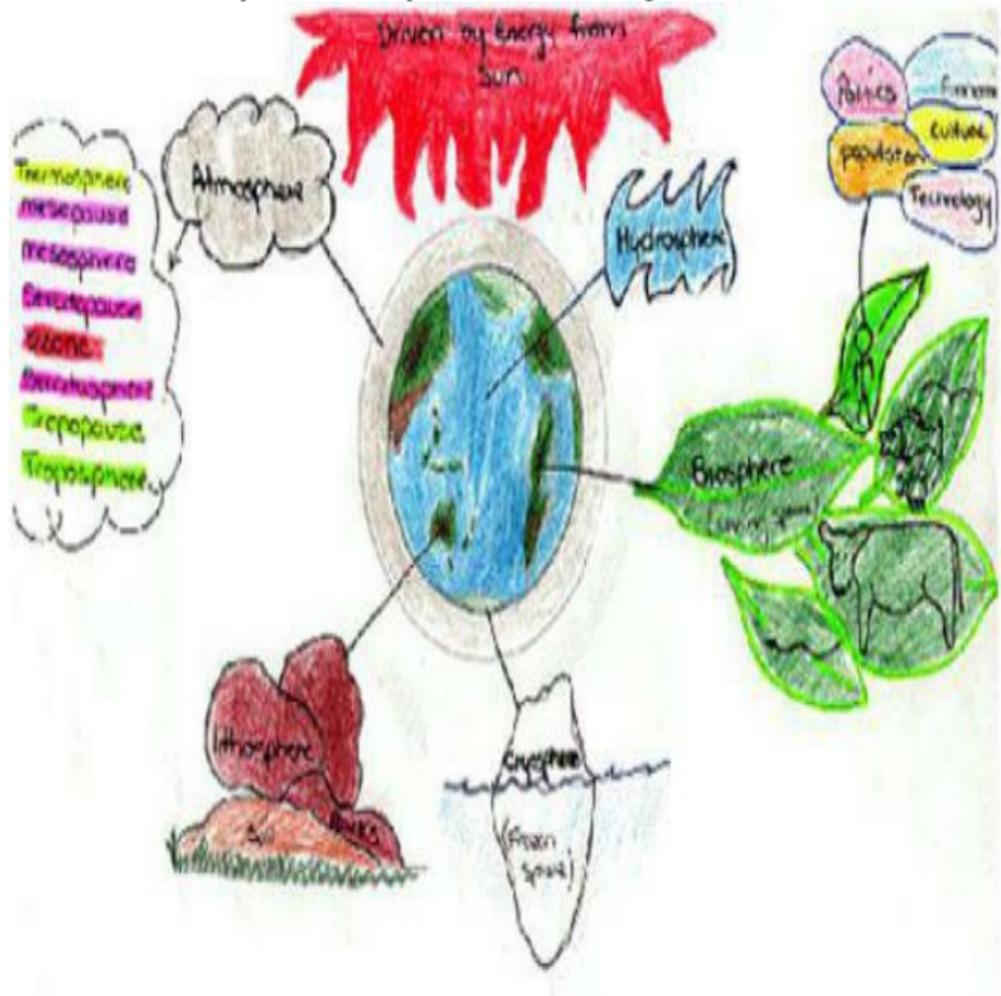
You want to address any questions you may have in advance so you can be looking for those answers while you read. Just by writing them down and acknowledging them, you'll be able to see the answers even if you're not consciously looking for them.

4. Start to read

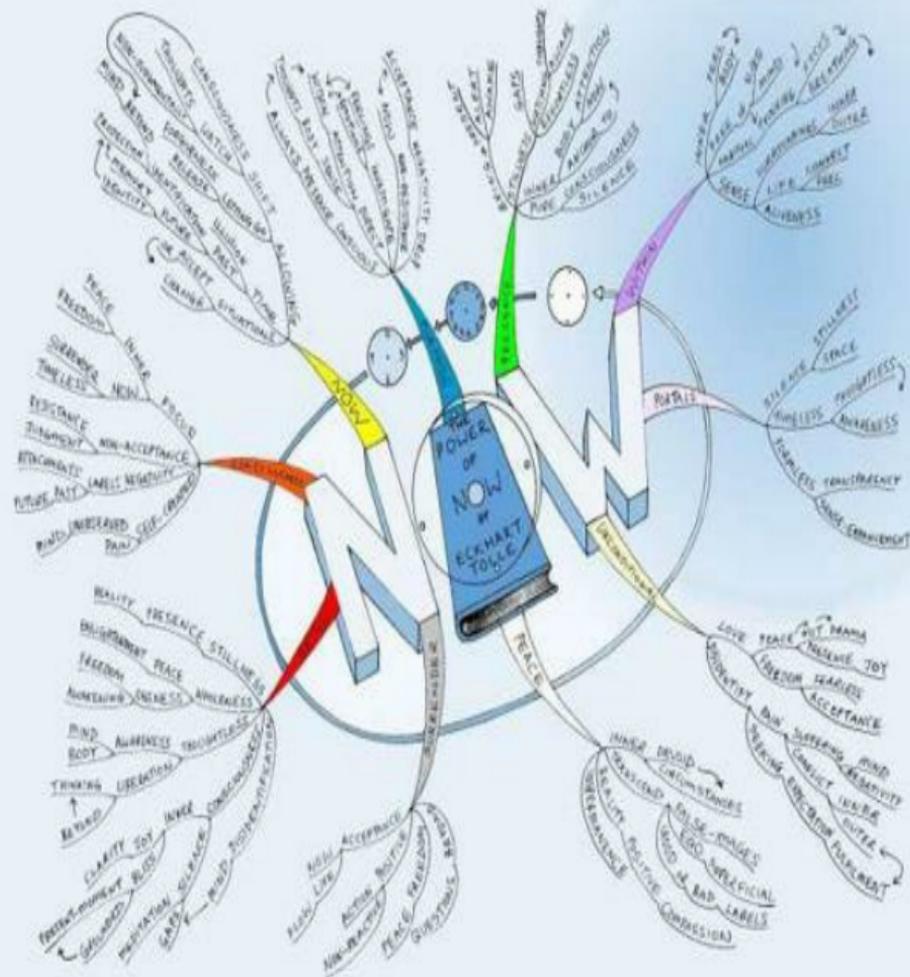
Once you've started your mind map you'll be ready to start reading the book. The main tip is not to try to mind map while you're reading. Focus on reading large chunks of the material then go back and mind map it when you're done. When you start, try reading a whole chapter then mind

mapping the chapter. If this is challenging, reduce the size of the chunk that you read. You can always increase it as you get more accustomed to mind mapping. When you you start this process you will notice that you retain more of the information you read and are able to access it much quicker later.

Below are some examples of mind maps created while reading.



The mind map in Figure 9-1 was created prior to a reading assignment was started. The creator was making notes on what was already known about the information in the reading.



© Paul Fereman <http://www.mindmapinspiration.com>

The mind map in Figure 9-2 is a summary of the Eckhart Tolle book, *The Power of Now*. It highlights different topics covered throughout the book and acts as a summary of its most meaningful topics according to the creator of the mind map. If someone else created a mind map of the same book it's very possible that it would look completely different from this one. That's the beauty of mind maps.



The mind map in Figure 9-3 is a book summary of *Eat that Frog!* By Brian Tracy. It's much less detailed than the *Power of Now* book summary and focuses on the main points of the book rather than separating it by chapters or sections.

Mind Maps for Writing

Some writers are diligent about creating outlines as they prepare to write something. This is a great habit to start but it doesn't always work for everyone. But it does help to have some kind of organizational plan before you start writing. Mind maps could appeal to many more people because they facilitate the creative process in a way that outlines don't. It stands to reason that mind maps would work great for books that are very research oriented since they help with compiling information, data and research but they can also work for works of fiction as well. Here are some steps to use to make the most of a mind map for writing.

1. Start the mind map with your main idea for the book

Focus on the overarching goal of the book to allow room for things to change as you start to plan. Don't make it so specific that your mind map becomes a planning trap.

2. Determine what's the most important element of the book and create sections to reflect that

For example, if your piece of writing will be very character driven then your first group of sections would be based on the characters. If your piece of writing needs to cover specific topics then those sections would be those topics.

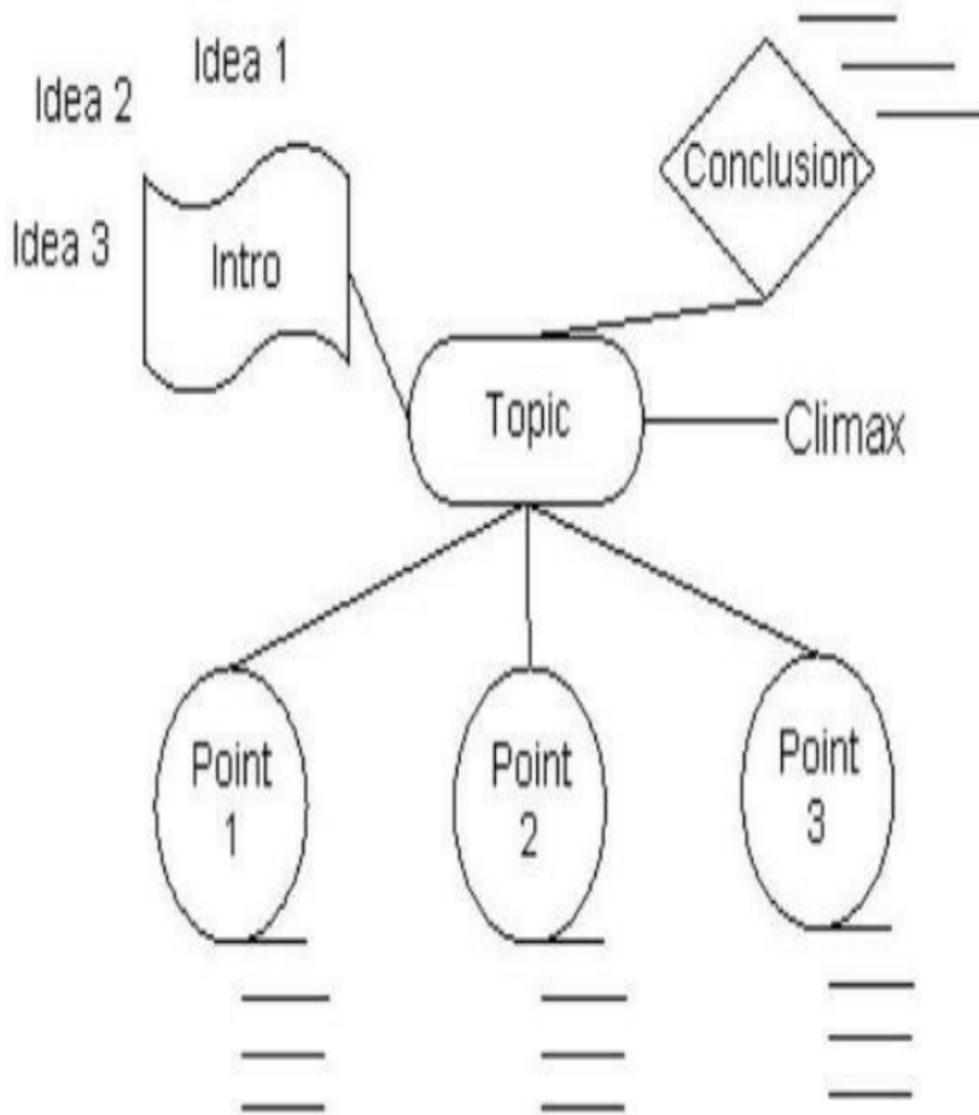
3. Expand the sections based on how you see each one developing as the book is written

This is where you can plan how you envision the book progressing or highlight different aspects of the topics you want to make sure you cover. This isn't set in stone but provides a great framework to keep you on track to touch on everything you want in the book

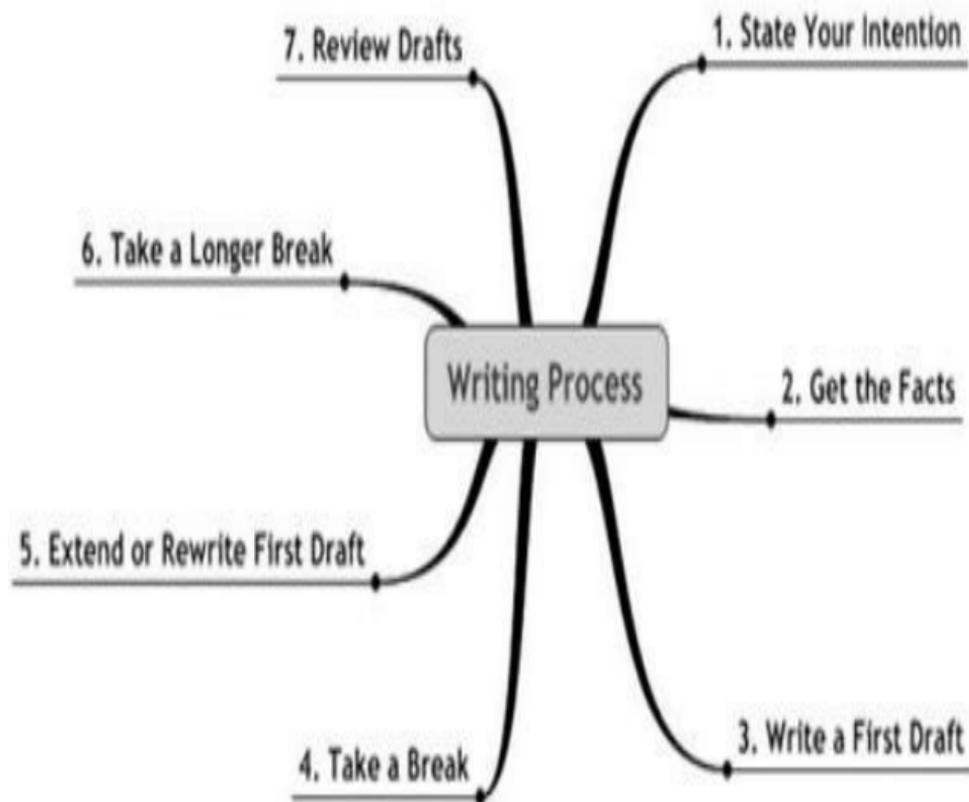
4. Start to write your book

Using a mind map to write can definitely make writing much more organized in a way that helps to peak the creative process. Unfortunately, outlines can sometimes feel like more work which is why many people don't use them. My goal isn't to discourage you from using outlines but to show you another way. If you want to continue to use [outlines](#), please do so. But if you want to try something different, mind maps can be something to add to your writing arsenal. By using a preparation process that gets those creative juices flowing while organizing your thoughts, you will definitely have an improved [writing process](#).

Below are some samples of mind maps created to help with different writing projects.



The mind map in Figure 9-4 is one that was created as a template for a creative writing project. This can serve as a framework for all of the projects that this writer does especially if she has to write multiple books in quick succession. Once you do that, you'll be able to take full advantage of my course on [getting your book on the Kindle](#) and can start making money from your writing.



The mind map in Figure 9-5 outlines the overall writing process. Some writers need help organizing how they will write rather than what they will write. This mind map provides a process in an organized way. It can easily be posted on a wall near where the writer will be working so it can be looked at occasionally throughout the process to keep her on track.

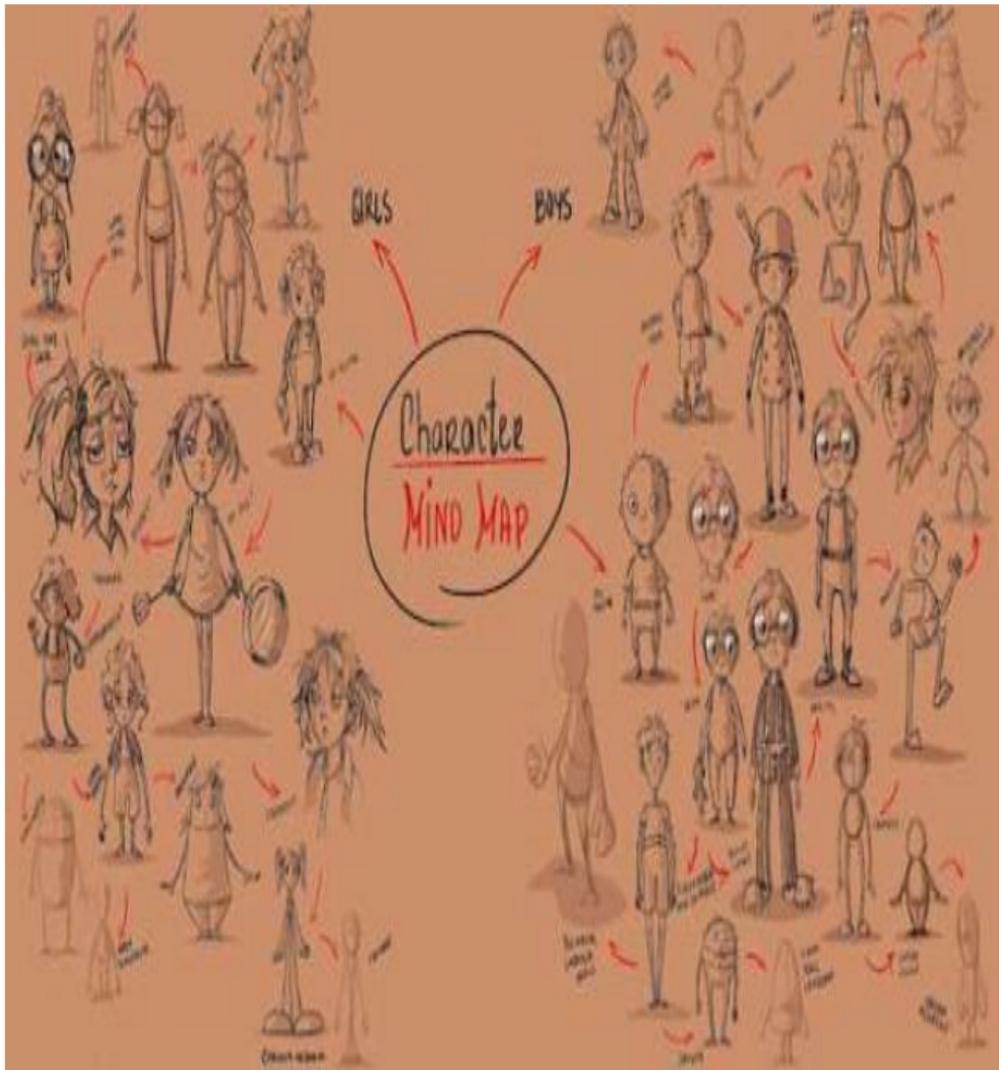


Figure 9-6 Character Mind Map

The mind map in Figure 9-6 wasn't created for a written work but it's still a great example of how

a mind map can be used to figure out characters in a story. This is a great example of how a mind map can work for someone who's a visual thinker. It makes good use of images and symbols combined with words mainly for labeling purposes.

If you notice, the writing mind maps are sometimes less colorful and more about organizing information to be used later. Sometimes writers aren't naturally visual because the written word is their creative tool but this doesn't mean they can't benefit from mind maps. They're not just for the people who are visual, they can work for anyone. Plus they can help make you a more prolific writer and get more books and writing pieces completed. This is always a benefit for writers because you can then have more work to get published.

Chapter 10: Mind Maps for Entrepreneurs

If you have or are considering starting your own business, you must be prepared to wear many different hats. It can be tough to juggle all of those hats but while you're growing a business, it's often necessary unless you're one of the lucky ones who have a substantial cash investment up front. If you're able to hire a full staff right away and delegate some of the responsibility to others, that's great.

But if you're not, you'll find a lot of benefit in using mind maps. In fact, even if you can hire a staff, you can still benefit greatly from using them. After reading all of the different ways to use mind maps, I'm sure you've had some inspiration for how to use them to run your business. Even if you haven't been inspired, I'm going to suggest you consider making mind maps an integral part of your planning.

So much of starting and running a business is planning, brainstorming, executing then starting all over again. One of the reasons many businesses fail is because of poor planning or no planning at all. I get it. Planning is tedious and can be uninteresting at times.

Most people don't start a business to spend all of their time planning things
and figuring out processes.

You typically start a business because you have a passion for something and you want to make money doing it. But reality quickly sets in when you realize that there is a lot of planning and preparation that must take place to make it possible for you to make money pursuing your passion. If you use mind maps to do some of that planning, not only will you be able to stimulate creative juices you may also begin to look forward to it. Here are a few of the different ways you can incorporate mind maps into your business.

1. Create your business plan

Entrepreneurs seem to fall into two distinct categories when it comes to business plans. Either they are very diligent and have a full business plan or they make the leap without one. There is actually no clear right or wrong approach in this case either. Some successful business people will tell you that a business plan is a waste of time and you just need to come up with a framework then start your business. Others will tell you that you're being reckless by not having a business plan and your business is doomed to fail because of it.

Here's a happy middle ground for everyone. Use a mind map to start. You can create a really detailed mind map business plan that will cause you to focus on important goals but won't take as long to create as a detailed business plan. Then if you aren't a business plan proponent you will have a framework to use and build on. If you are a business plan proponent, you can take the mind map and turn it into a full business plan.





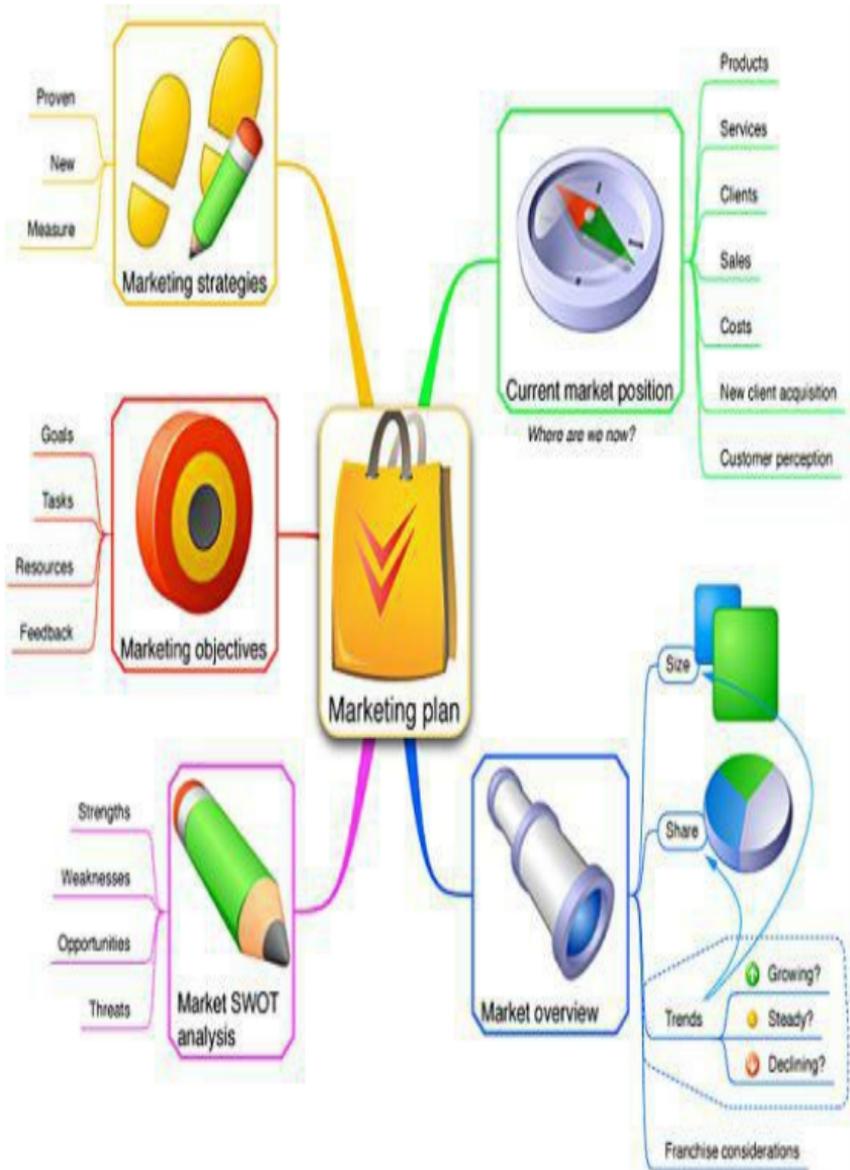
The mind map in Figure 10-2 is outlining the things necessary to start a new venture. It's a great example of a plan that could be created in lieu of a separate business plan.

2. Create your marketing plan

Even if you don't like the idea of creating a business plan, your company will need a marketing plan and that has to happen before you start running it. You definitely need to know how you plan to get customers. A mind map can help you start and build on your marketing plan.



The mind map in Figure 10-3 is of a marketing strategy. It outlines the different strategies and tactics that need to be put in place to effectively market this particular company and its products/services.

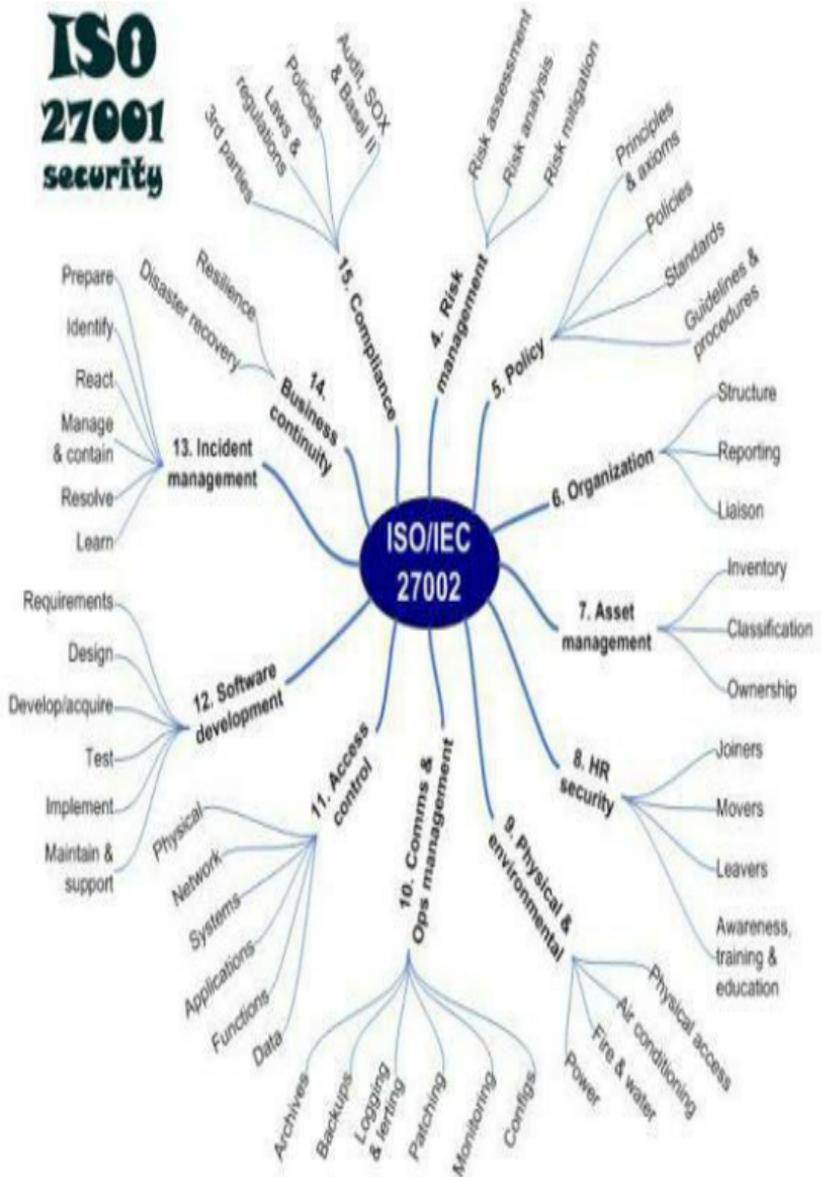


The mind map in Figure 10-4 is of a marketing plan. It makes great use of images and uses those as the main sections of the plan that need to be addressed.

3. Create company SOP's (standard operating procedure)

Even if you don't start out with a company standard operating procedure, you will need to get one once you start running your business. If you don't have a set of procedures in place that address how you're going to handle business operations that happen on a regular basis, you will find yourself spending a lot of time on these tasks. It's important to set a standard for these tasks to ensure that your business has consistency as you grow and expand.

ISO 27001 security



The mind map in Figure 10-5 is of a standard operating procedure as it relates to the ISO 27001 Security which is a security management procedure for information technology management. This is a complex topic that only people who work in IT would most likely understand. However, by looking at this mind map you can see how it outlines the standard operating procedures for the different areas.

4. Create your company website

Before you hire a website designer it's important that you map out your vision for it in writing. A mind map will allow you to consider not only what you want on the different pages but how they connect to one another. Your website designer will need this information to make your website best fit your needs and you could save a lot of time and money by figuring it out in advance.

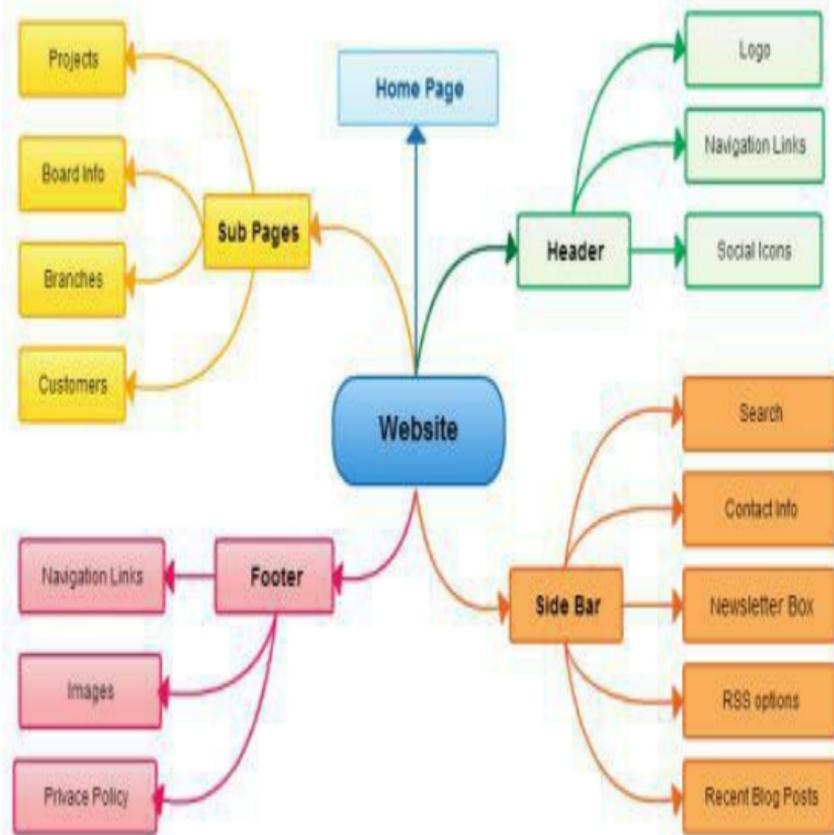


Figure 10-6 Web Design Mind Map

The mind map in Figure 10-6 outlines how a website could be set up. It considers the different elements that are most commonly found and breaks down how everything will be connected and laid out.

5. Organize meetings

Agendas are par for the course when planning a meeting but some meetings are a part of a larger plan and need to be thought through from beginning to end. Ideally

meetings shouldn't last for long periods of time and it helps to have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish from it. A mind map will give you the opportunity to work through the meeting completely. It doesn't have to be a firm plan but a flexible framework.



The mind map in Figure 10-7 is an example of how a meeting agenda can be created using a mind map. This looks like a fairly detailed meeting that has a lot of parts that need to be addressed. It might be overwhelming if it were in outline format but this way makes it easier to digest.

The sky's the limit when it comes to using mind maps for your business. Any area that requires planning, preparation and organization can benefit from the use of a mind map while inspiring creativity in the process. Imagine how less likely you are to dread those boring but important tasks if you could do them in a way that's creative but still effective? Mind maps are a win/win for entrepreneurs.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

When Tony Buzon created the concept of mind maps, he wanted to address the different ways that people receive and share information. While there is nothing wrong with creating outlines, lists, charts or graphs it's important that there are options that address those non-linear thinkers. Mind maps are a great addition to the area of data visualization. They can be used in any situation where complex thought must be involved. The basic format of each mind map is the same. It's really about the reason why you're creating it and what you hope to gain from doing it. It's one of the few forms of visual data that comes from a creative place.

Charts and graphs may look creative when they're completed but they don't typically come from a creative place. You have to get and organize the data or information that's going to be represented in the chart or graph before turning it into the visual creation. So while the outcome can be as colorful and dynamic as a mind map, the process to get there isn't as dynamic.

Outlines and lists don't actually look colorful or dynamic when they're finished because both are simply an organized collection of words, sentences and phrases. In fact, this is one of the reasons why people who are more visual may shy away from creating them. It feels like work to sit down and map out a plan using words even if the plan is an enjoyable one. Mind maps offer an option that encourages creativity while tackling important tasks.

If you've never given mind maps a shot, I wholly encourage you do so. I'm a big fan of people finding creative ways to be as productive as possible.

Give yourself the time it takes to tap into the creative organization of a mind map and you will be a mind mapping aficionado.

Did you like this book?



Thank you!!!
Can I ask
a favor?

I see you've made it all the way to the end of my book. I'm so glad you enjoyed it enough to get

all the way through.

If you liked the book, would you be open to leaving me a 4 or 5 star review?

You see, I'm a self published author, and when people like you are able to give me reviews, it helps me out in a big way.

You can leave a review right here:

<http://amzn.to/15REVIEWZ3HD>

It'd really mean a lot to me.

Thank you,
Michelle Mapman

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