

Mind Mapping

Writing Centre Learning Guide

Mind mapping is an effective means to take notes and brainstorm essay topics. A mind map involves writing down a central theme and thinking of new and related ideas which radiate out from the centre. By focusing on key ideas written down in your own words and looking for connections between them, you can map knowledge in a way that will help you to better understand and retain information.

What is mind mapping?

Mind mapping was developed as an effective method for generating ideas by association. In order to create a mind map, you usually start in the middle of the page with the central theme/main idea and from that point you work outward in all directions to create a growing diagram composed of keywords, phrases, concepts, facts and figures.

It can be used for assignments and essay writing especially in the initial stages, where it is an ideal strategy to use for your 'thinking'. Mind mapping can be used for generating, visualising, organising, note-taking, problem-solving, decision-making, revising and clarifying your university topic, so that you can get started with assessment tasks. Essentially, a mind map is used to 'brainstorm' a topic and is a great strategy for students.

How do I use mind mapping?

You can use mind mapping for the following:

- taking notes in a lecture and listening for the most important points or keywords
- showing links and relationships between the main ideas in your subject
- brainstorming all the things you already know about an essay question
- planning the early stages of an essay by visualising all the aspects of the question
- organising your ideas and information by making it accessible on a single page
- stimulating creative thinking and creative solutions to problems
- reviewing learning in preparation for a test or examination.

How do I get started with mind mapping?

- 1) Place the central theme/main idea or controlling point in the centre of your page. You may find it easier to place your page on the side, in landscape orientation, which is easier for drawing purposes.
- 2) Use lines, arrows, speech bubbles, branches and different colours as ways of showing the connection between the central theme/main idea and your ideas which stem from that focus. The relationships are important, as they may form your essay paragraphs.

WRITING CENTRE

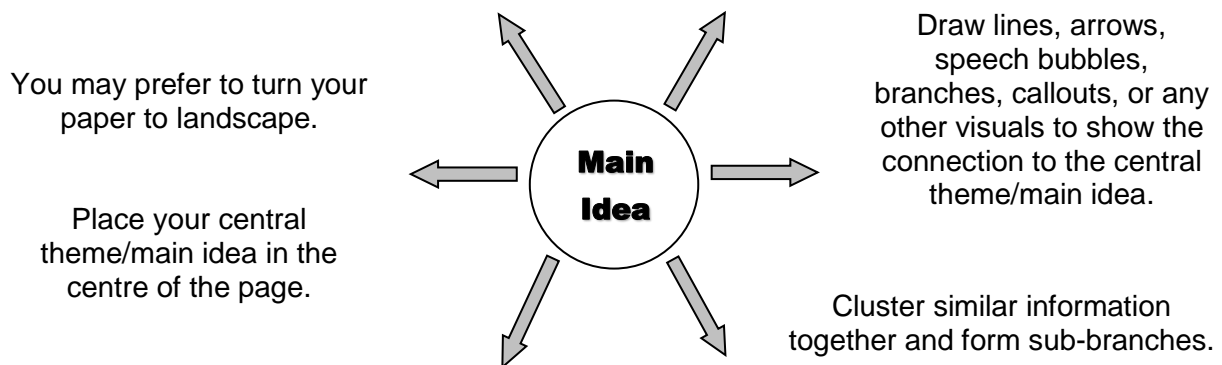
Level 3 East, Hub Central
North Terrace campus, The University of Adelaide

ph +61 8 8313 3021
writingcentre@adelaide.edu.au
www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/

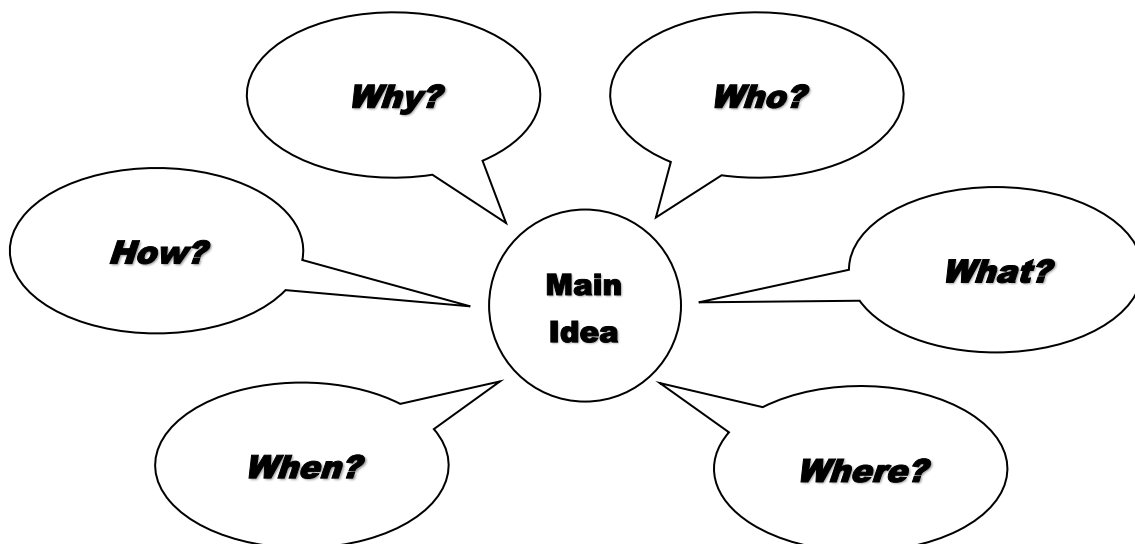
- 3) Avoid creating an artistic masterpiece. You should draw quickly without major pauses or editing. Chances are, your first idea was fine and you placed that idea in the direction or on the branch you thought made the most sense. It is important in the initial stages of mind mapping to consider every possibility, even those you may not use.
- 4) Choose different colours to symbolise different things e.g. you may choose blue for something you must incorporate in your paper, black for other good ideas, and red for the things you need to research or check with your tutor/lecturer. Your method is entirely up to you, but try to remain consistent so that you can better reflect on your mind map at a later stage.
- 5) Leave some space on your page. The reason for this is that you can continue to add to your diagram over a period of time. If A4 sized paper feels too small, you may like to use A3.

What does a mind map look like?

A standard mind map begins with the following shape:



The following mind map is a basic model with which you can get started on a research topic:



Example: Mind Mapping 'Strategies for Climate Change' Essay Topic

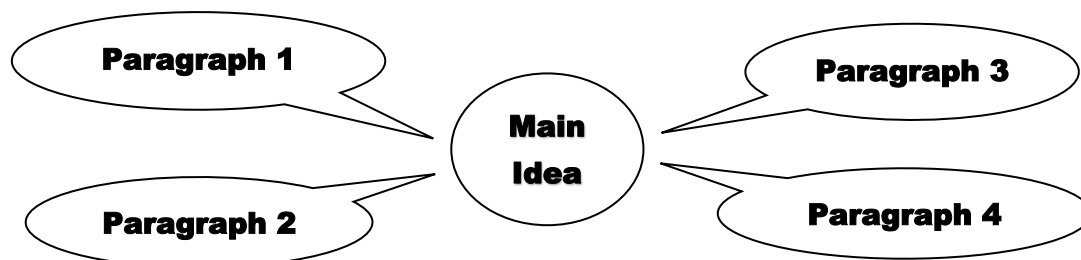


<http://learningfundamentals.com.au/resources/>

How do I turn my mind map into an academic essay?

Before you can begin to write your essay paper, you must first understand and determine what the 'main' idea of your writing will be. *What is the central theme/main idea or controlling point that you are trying to convey to your reader?* Whatever the topic, it is always a good idea to think about the issues that surround that topic and mind mapping is an excellent form of brainstorming.

The information that comprises your paragraphs must have a relationship to that controlling point. The decision about what to include in your paragraphs ultimately begins with your ideas. Ideally, each paragraph in an essay should contain one idea or cover one aspect relevant to the central theme on your mind map.



What are the benefits of using mind mapping?

To achieve higher levels of concentration and creativity, together with greater organisation and more concise communication, mind mapping might be an effective strategy for you to consider. The benefits of mind mapping are many and varied. In summary they include:

- giving you an overview of a large subject/broad topic and allowing you to represent it in a more concise fashion
- encouraging you to see the bigger picture and creative pathways
- enabling you to plan/make choices about the selection of resource material you have for an assignment and where you are going to place it
- providing you with a more attractive and enjoyable format for your eye/brain to look at, muse over and remember.

Useful websites

<http://learningfundamentals.com.au/resources/>

<http://www.udel.edu/chem/white/C342/CMap.ppt>

<http://tutorials.istudy.psu.edu/conceptmaps/>

<http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk/mind-maps-examples/education.htm>

<http://www.mindmapart.com/>

http://www.informationtamers.com/WikIT/index.php?title=Information_map_types

Videos on Mind Mapping

http://au.youtube.com/results?search_query=tony+buzan