[What is Mind Mapping? (and How to Get Started Immediately)](#)

A mind map is a graphical way to represent ideas and concepts. It is a visual thinking tool that helps structuring information, helping you to better analyze, comprehend, synthesize, recall and generate new ideas.

Just as in every great idea, **its power lies in its simplicity.**

In a mind map, as opposed to traditional note taking or a linear text, information is structured in a way that resembles much more closely how your brain actually works. Since it is an activity that is both analytical and artistic, it engages your brain in a much, much richer way, helping in all its cognitive functions. And, best of all, **it is fun**!

So, how does a mind map look like? Better than explaining is showing you an example.

[(click for larger image)](#)

This is a mind map about – conveniently enough – **mind mapping itself.** It presents, in a visual way, the core elements and techniques on how to draw mind maps. Yes, I know this may look a little too messy initially, but bear with me: once you break the ingrained habit of linear note taking, you won't look back.

Benefits and Uses

I think I already gave away the benefits of mind mapping and why mind maps work. Basically, mind mapping avoids dull, linear thinking, jogging your creativity and making note taking fun again.

But what can we use mind maps for?

- Note taking
- Brainstorming (individually or in groups)
- Problem solving
- Studying and memorization
- Planning
- Researching and consolidating information from multiple sources
- Presenting information
- Gaining insight on complex subjects
- Jogging your creativity

It is hard to make justice to the number of uses mind maps can have – the truth is that they can help clarify your thinking in pretty much anything, in many different contexts: personal, family, educational or business. Planning you day or planning your life, summarizing a book, launching a project, planning and creating presentations, writing blog posts -well, you get the idea – anything, really.

How to Draw a Mind Map

Drawing a mind map is as simple as 1-2-3:

- **Start** in the middle of a blank page, writing or drawing the idea you intend to develop. I would suggest that you use the page in landscape orientation.
- **Develop** the related subtopics around this central topic, connecting each of them to the center with a line.
- **Repeat** the same process for the subtopics, generating lower-level subtopics as you see fit, connecting each of those to the corresponding subtopic.

Some more recommendations:

- **Use colors, drawings and symbols copiously.** Be as visual as you can, and your brain will thank you. I've met many people who don't even try, with the excuse they're "not artists". Don't let that keep you from trying it out!.
- **Keep the topics labels as short as possible**, keeping them to a single word – or, better yet, to only a picture. Especially in your first mind maps, the temptation to write a complete phrase is enormous, but always look for opportunities to shorten it to a single word or figure – your mind map will be much more effective that way.
- **Vary text size, color and alignment**. Vary the thickness and length of the lines. Provide as many visual cues as you can to emphasize important points. Every little bit helps engaging your brain.
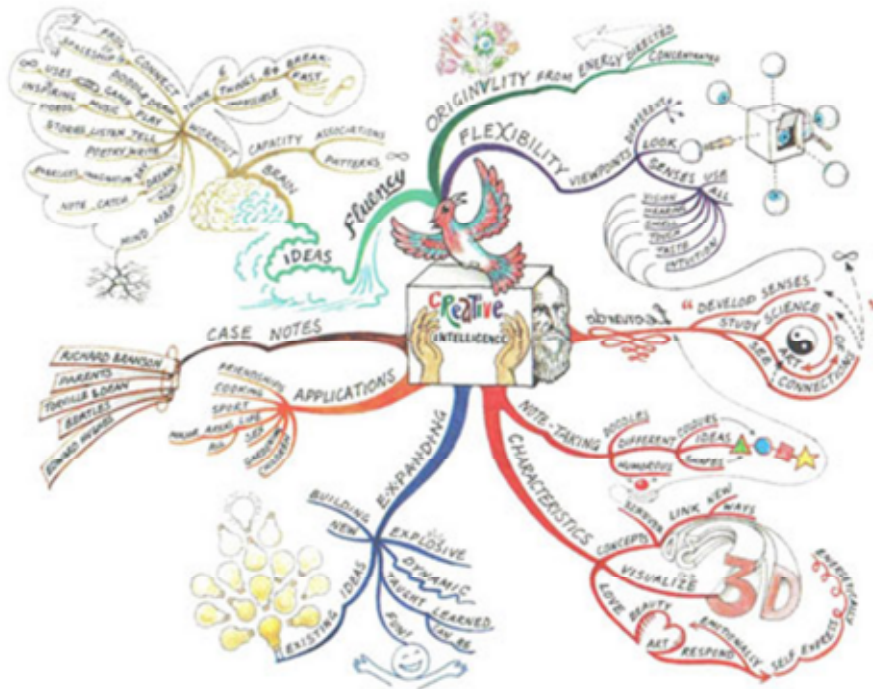
Final Thoughts

Mind mapping is an absolutely fascinating and rich topic – this post only scratches the surface. If you want more reference material now, Wikipedia is always a good starting point.

Mind mapping is a passion for me, and it is one of the strongest drivers behind this blog. I plan to explore it in much more depth – publishing mind maps, providing tips, talking about computer mind mapping, and much more. Just make sure to keep visiting (or better yet, subscribe).

In the meantime, please give mind mapping a chance – try it out. Follow there handy tips and see the results for yourself. Don't worry too much about doing it the "right" way – just make it fun.

To inspire you, one more great mind map from Buzan Centre Australia on Creative Intelligence.

(click for larger image)