

# Mind Mapping FAQ

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## What is a mind map?

A mind map consists of a central word or concept, around the central word you draw the 5 to 10 main ideas that relate to that word. You then take each of those child words and again draw the 5 to 10 main ideas that relate to each of those words.

In this way an exponential number of related ideas can quickly be produced with virtually no mental effort. The concept of 'writers block' is hard to understand once you have grasped the use of this simple technique!

## What can you do with a mind map

### Note taking

As a means of note taking mindmaps have several advantages over other systems:

- You can place each new idea in the right place, regardless of the order of presentation.
- It encourages the reduction of each concept to a single word.
- The resultant mind map can be 'seen' by the eye and memorized by your visual memory which has been shown to be almost perfect.

### Creative Writing & Report Writing.

A mind map lets you rapidly produce an almost infinite number of ideas, and at the same time organize them by placing each idea next to what it is related to. This makes a very powerful tool for creative writing or report writing, where it is very important to get down all your ideas first. It is then a trivial matter to read the mind map and write a sentence or paragraph on each 'key word'.

### Studying the easy way

Instead of simply reading a book on some topic, next time try using a mind map while you read. Just draw your central word and then begin reading, everytime you read some idea that strikes you as important or interesting, just add it onto your mind map in the appropriate place.

When you have finished reading the book you will have a one page mindmap which summarizes everything of interest in that book. You will probably also have added several things which

you thought up yourself during your reading. The act of creating the mind map will have greatly increased how much you absorbed from the book, and if you ever want to review the topic all you need to do is to look at the mind map. If you want to learn the information very solidly then try to redraw the mindmap from memory a few times. You will find it very easy.

### Studying as a group (or family)

A group of people can work together to produce a single mind map by following these steps:

1. Individually draw mind maps on what you already know about the subject.
2. Draw a group mind map combining what you already know.
3. Decide what you need to learn based on this group mindmap.
4. Individually study the material, all covering the same areas for depth of knowledge or all covering different areas for speed as appropriate. Each person completing the mind map by his/her self.
5. Again combine as a group and create a final master group mind map.

Families who have started regular weekend study days as a hobby have benefited tremendously. Children typically go from average or below average to second or third from the top in all subjects and the parents also find themselves excelling at work. One Swedish family was besieged by neighbourhood children asking if they could join in the fun!

## Meetings & Think Tanks

As soon as you write something up on a white board you have immediately lost the creativity which everyone has. So any creative meeting should always start by people spending a couple of minutes individually mind mapping. Then as a way of running a meeting a master mind map on a white board allows every idea or statement to be recorded and placed in an appropriate place so that it can then be discussed at a sensible time. Also no one feels ignored as all ideas are placed on the mind map.

## Giving a Talk

When giving a talk a set of notes in the form of a single mind map has several advantages over other memory aids:

- **Brief:** Only a single page is needed
- **Not reading:** As ideas are reduced to single words you will not be 'reading' your speech.
- **Flexibility:** If someone asks a question you can move instantly to the place on your mindmap which relates to that question and then return to where you were without losing yourself in a pile of cards or papers.

## What can you do with a computer mind map

Computer Mind Maps offer several major advances over the original paper mind map. These advantages should combine to make Mind Mapping as popular as it should be:

### Easy re-structuring

You can easily restructure your mind map, moving words and trees of words around in seconds. This makes the computer mind map even better for quickly creating new ideas and ordering ideas into a meaningful structure.

### Highlighting

Using the style system you can instantly highlight different features of a complex mind map. E.g. you might make all the 'expensive' options suddenly appear in bright red or all the 'good' ideas appear in bold underlined type.

### Comments

Being brief and using single words is the key to a good mind map, but sometimes you need to write sentences of explanation for yourself or others. The computer mind map allows you to do this but to keep the extra information hidden until it is needed. This can also be used for learning information, you should be able to recite the 'comment' information without looking at it, when you can do this you have 'learned' the contents of the mind map and only need the key words to bring it back.

### Presentability

In this day and age it is not really acceptable to present your manager with a crayon drawing of your plans. A computer generated mind map gets past this problem by having the same high quality appearance as any other document.

### Export

With a computer mind map you can instantly export the mindmap to a normal text file or to a structured word processor document.

## How was it invented

Mind Mapping was invented by Tony Buzan following his research into note taking techniques.

### Note taking

Tony Buzan studied the three common techniques for taking notes during a lecture:

- Writing a complete transcript.
- Writing a summary.
- Writing key words only.

He then tested each of these and found the following results when testing how much was learned or remembered:

Least learned = 1

1. Complete transcript given to student
2. Student writes complete transcript
3. Summary given to student
4. Student writes summary
5. Key words given to student
6. Student writes own key words

Most learned = 6

### Visual Memory

Another seemingly unrelated study on memory was also used in the formation of mind maps. In this study by Ralph Haber 2560 photos were shown to subjects. Then subjects were shown 2560 pairs of photos and asked in each case to say which photo had been in the original group of 2560 and which had not. The success rate at this test averaged between 85% and 95% showing that humans have an almost photographic visual memory. In another study where 10,000 vivid pictures were used a success rate of 99% was recorded.

### Originality

If two people all draw mini mind maps around the idea 'shoe'. (A mini mind map is a mind map which only goes one level deep, i.e. it only has words which are directly related to the central idea). If each person comes up with seven related words, how many do you think would be duplicates between the two people? Studies have shown that the average is one word in common, and anything above two is very very unusual.

Try this yourself, get a friend to write down the first seven things related to the word "shoe", and do the same yourself, then compare the lists.

### Result, Mind Maps

With these results and other research Tony Buzan came up with a new method for taking notes. His new system was based on the idea of making the notes as brief as possible and also as interesting to the eye as possible. The surprising result was that mind maps can be used in many different ways other than just simple note taking.

## The mailing list

The Mailing List now at:

To: [LISTSERV@SJVUM.STJOHNS.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@SJVUM.STJOHNS.EDU)  
Subject: (doesn't care)

message:

SUB DEBONO Firstname Surname

SUB BUZAN Firstname Surname

I believe the system will then send you a full charter of the mailing list plus instructions including how to leave it. For more help and to share mind maps register to the Mind Map EMail list. Send to: [maiser@emagic.marc.cri.nz](mailto:maiser@emagic.marc.cri.nz)

Related news groups etc:

[misc.creativity](#)

## The FTP site and WWW page

The WWW URL for mind mapping is:

[Mind Mapping FAQ](#)

[The UK Buzan Centre](#)

## Books

"The Aging Heresy" The Buzan Centres Ltd, 37 Waterloo Rd., Bournemouth, Dorset, BH9 1BD., U.K. Tel: +44(0)202-533593 Fax: +44(0)202-534572

Buzan, Tony. "The Mind Map Book". ISBN 0 563 86373 8, 1993.

Haber, Ralph N. "How We Remember What We See". Scientific America, 105, May 1970.

Nancy, Margulies. "Mapping Inner Space: Learning and Teaching Mind Mapping"

Gabriele, Lusser Rico. "Writing The Natural Way" ISBN: 0-87477-186-2 and 0-87477-236-s(ppbk.)

Dianna, Booher. "Clean Up Your Act; Effective Ways to Organize Paperwork and Get It Out of Your Life"

"Mind Map" is a registered trademark of the Buzan Organisation 1990.

For more information on products & training available from Tony Buzan send a LARGE 10x30cm stamped, self addressed envelope to one of:

The Buzan Centres Ltd, Suites 2/3 Cardigan House, 37 Waterloo Rd, Winton, Dorset BH9 1BD, UK. Telephone (0202) 533593, FAX (0202) 534572.

The Buzan Centres USA Inc, 415 Federal Highway, Lake Park, Florida 33404, USA. Telephone (407) 881 0188, FAX: (407) 845 3210.

## Software

### Mind Mapper 1.0, by EGLE Magic.

A windows based mind mapping application, it allows mind maps to be quickly and easily created and then restructured. Shareware, free to students (18 and below) and high schools.

FTP <ftp.cica.indiana.edu/pub/pc/win3/pim/mindmap.zip>

[Fetch mindmap.zip 300K](#) (currently unsupported shareware, here is a free registration code to disable the shareware warnings, enter registration name "free" and key "124075" )

### Mind Maps Plus Software program

Runs under DOS, requires only VGA. Cedar Software, +44 250 875929

## **Inspiration software**

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