

Brainstorming: Mind Maps

Mind mapping is a useful technique that gives structure to the common process known as “brainstorming”. With brainstorming, we encourage ourselves to think of as many ideas about an issue as possible in order to expand our thinking. Mind mapping enhances this process.

Uses

In the university context, mind maps are useful in several ways. They can help to:

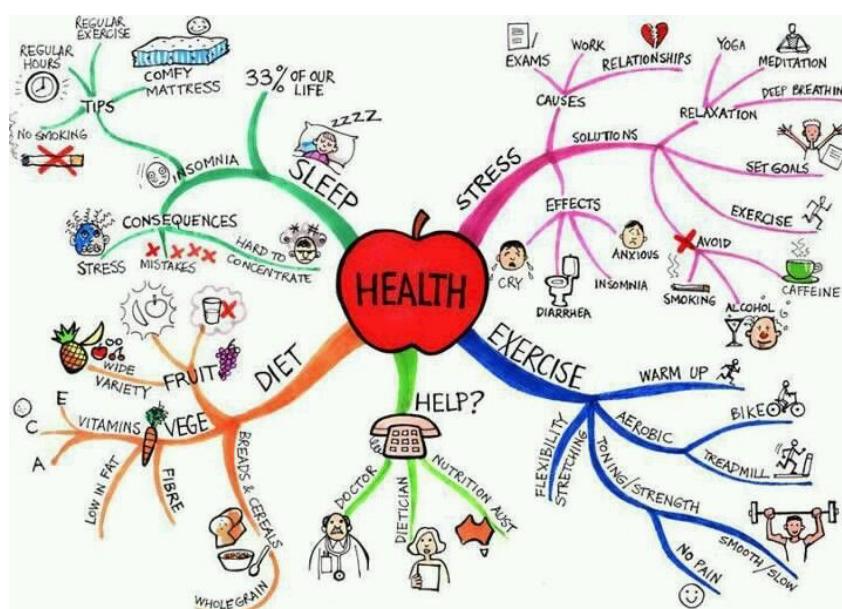
- focus your research for assignments (i.e., narrow down things you need to look for)
- solve problems
- develop a structure for an essay or report (to work out what to cover)
- remember content (for an exam or test).

Mind maps can be as detailed and as stylised as the occasion demands.

Principles

1. **A mind map conveys relationships** between a key subject and other ideas or information
2. **Subordinate, related ideas** radiate from the central idea like “branches” from a tree, and are located on a radial line as a key image or word. The most important subordinate branches are defined, e.g., if “Holiday” was the key idea, one branch might be “Things to take”, another “Method of transport”, another “Things to do” and so on. By contrast, if your key issue is “Things to take on a holiday” this would lead to a very different set of radial connections (toiletries, clothes, money, equipment, etc)
3. **Ideas of lesser but related importance** are represented as “twigs” on each branch
4. **Relevant information** is reflected as “nodes” on the branching structures, linked or placed close together to show the connection
5. **Mind maps are often highly coloured** to help consolidate memorisation of the key ideas (it can help to remember a “green” branch as representing a particular set of concepts, for example)
6. **The pictorial quality of a mind map** (using logos, photos and diagrams) can further enhance memorisation.

Example: Healthy Mind Map



(Source: <https://www.mindmapart.com/health-mind-map-jane-genovese/>)

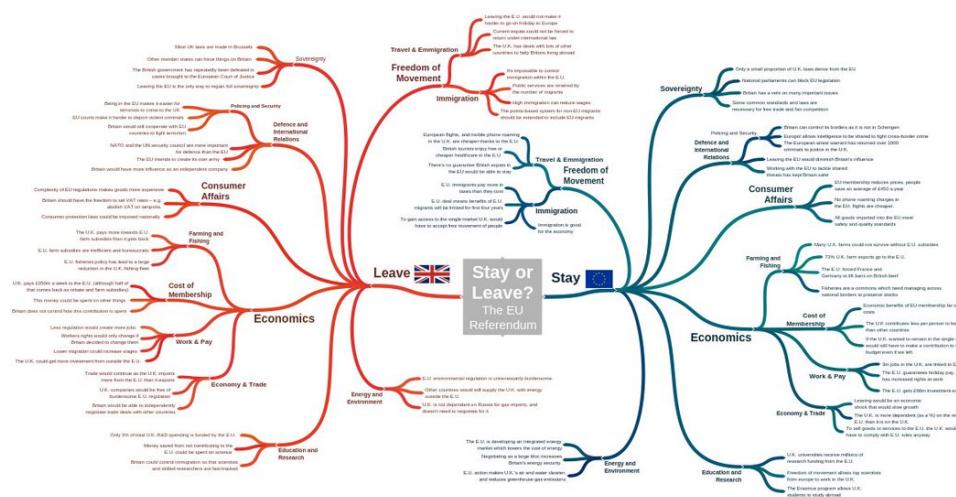


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Tools

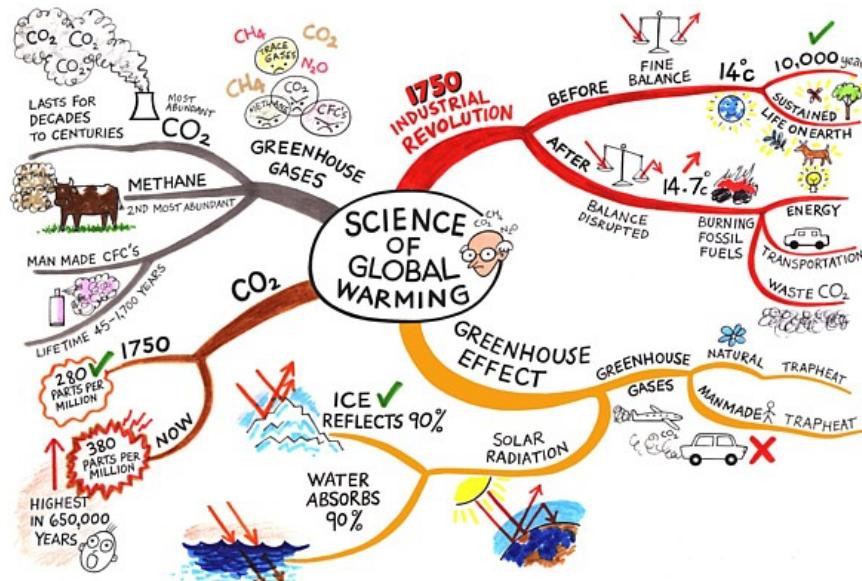
A range of software is available to assist with the mapping process, such as "Insert Shapes" in Word. Google the words 'mind maps' and your subject area to find more relevant examples.

Example: Stay or Leave?



(Source: <https://twitter.com/CoggleIt/status/745573819478319104>)

Example: Science of Global Warming



(Source: <https://www.mindmapart.com/science-of-global-warming-mind-map-jane-genovese/>)

Related helpsheets

- Argument Maps
- Concept Maps



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