

# Mind Maps – a Tool for Creativity



The human brain is very different from a computer. Whereas a computer works in a linear fashion, the brain works *associatively* as well as linearly - comparing, integrating and synthesizing as it goes. Association plays a dominant role in nearly every mental function, and words themselves are no exception. Every single word and idea has numerous links attaching it to other ideas and concepts.

Mind Maps™, developed by Tony Buzan are an effective method of note-taking and useful for the generation of ideas by associations. To make a mind map, one starts in the centre of the page with the main idea, and works outward in all directions, producing a growing and organized structure composed of key words and key images. Key features are:

- **Organisation**
- **Key Words**
- **Association**
- **Clustering**
- **Visual Memory** - Print the key words, use colour, symbols, icons, 3D-effects, arrows and outlining groups of words
- **Outstandingness** - every Mind Map needs a unique centre
- **Conscious involvement**

Mind Maps are beginning to take on the same structure as memory itself. Once a Mind Map is drawn, it seldom needs to be referred to again. Mind Maps help organize information.

Because of the large amount of association involved, they can be very creative, tending to generate new ideas and associations that have not been thought of before. Every item in a map is in effect, a centre of another map.

The creative potential of a mind map is useful in [brainstorming](#) sessions. You only need to start with the basic problem as the centre, and generate associations and ideas from it in order to arrive at a large number of different possible approaches. By presenting your thoughts and perceptions in a spatial manner and by using colour and pictures, a better overview is gained and new connections can be made visible.

Mind maps are a way of representing associated thoughts with symbols rather than with extraneous words something like organic chemistry. The mind forms associations almost instantaneously, and "mapping" allows you to write your ideas quicker than expressing them using only words or phrases.

## 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 a large 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 Mind Maps 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, every time 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 Mind Map 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 Mind Map from memory a few times. You will find it very easy.

## 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 Mind Map which relates to that question and then return to where you were without losing yourself in a pile of cards or papers.

# Summary of the Mind Map Laws

## 1. Use emphasis

- Always use a central image
- Use images throughout your Mind Map
- Use three or more colours per central image
- Use dimension in images
- Use synaesthesia (the blending of the physical senses)
- Use variations of size of printing, line and image
- Use organized spacing
- Use appropriate spacing

## 2. Use Association

- Use arrows when you want to make connections within and across the branch pattern
- Use colours
- Use codes

## 3. Be Clear

- Use only one key word per line
- Print all words
- Print key words on lines
- Make line length equal to word length
- Connect lines to other lines
- Make the central lines thicker
- Make your boundaries 'embrace' your branch outline
- Make your images as clear as possible

- Keep your paper placed horizontally in front of you
- Keep your printing as upright as possible

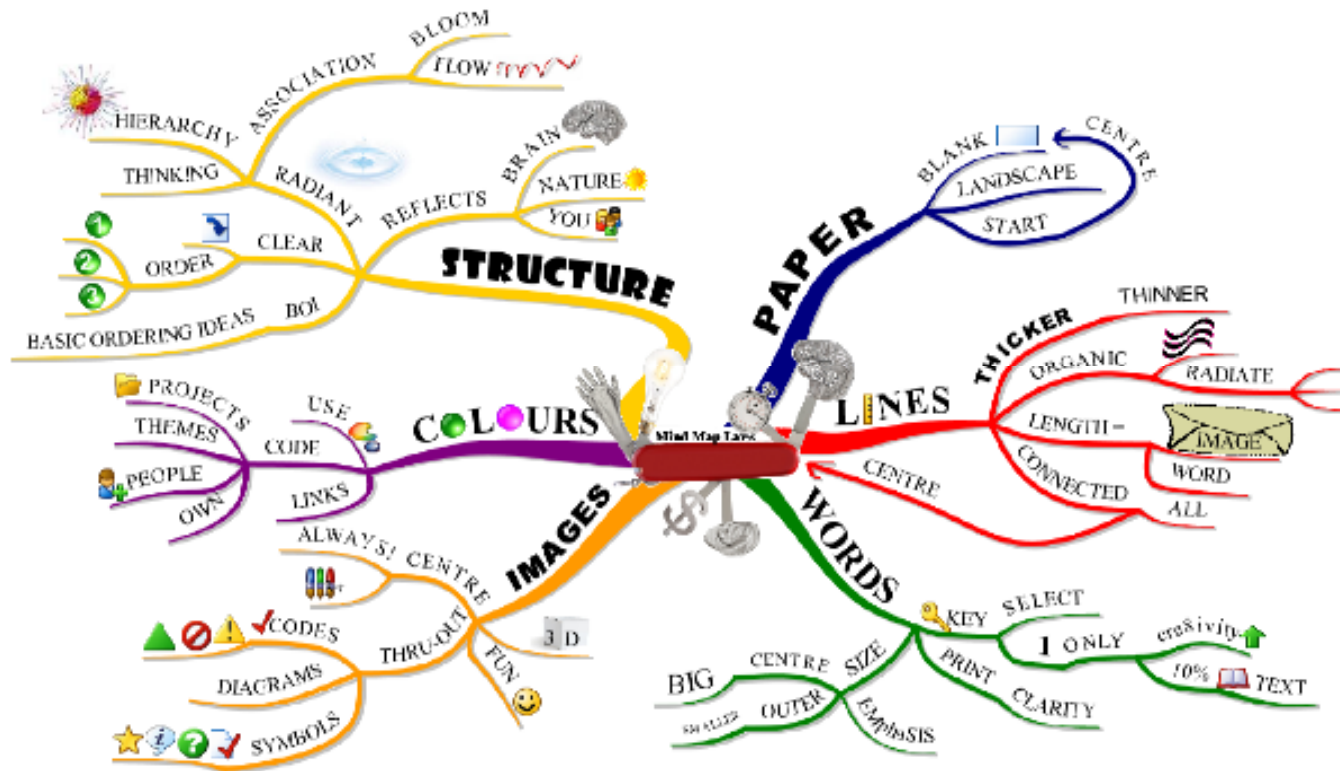
#### **4. Develop a personal style**

##### ***Layout***

- 1 Use hierarchy
- 2 Use numerical order

Source: <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~charles57/Creative/Mindmap/Radiant.html>

# How to Mind Map®



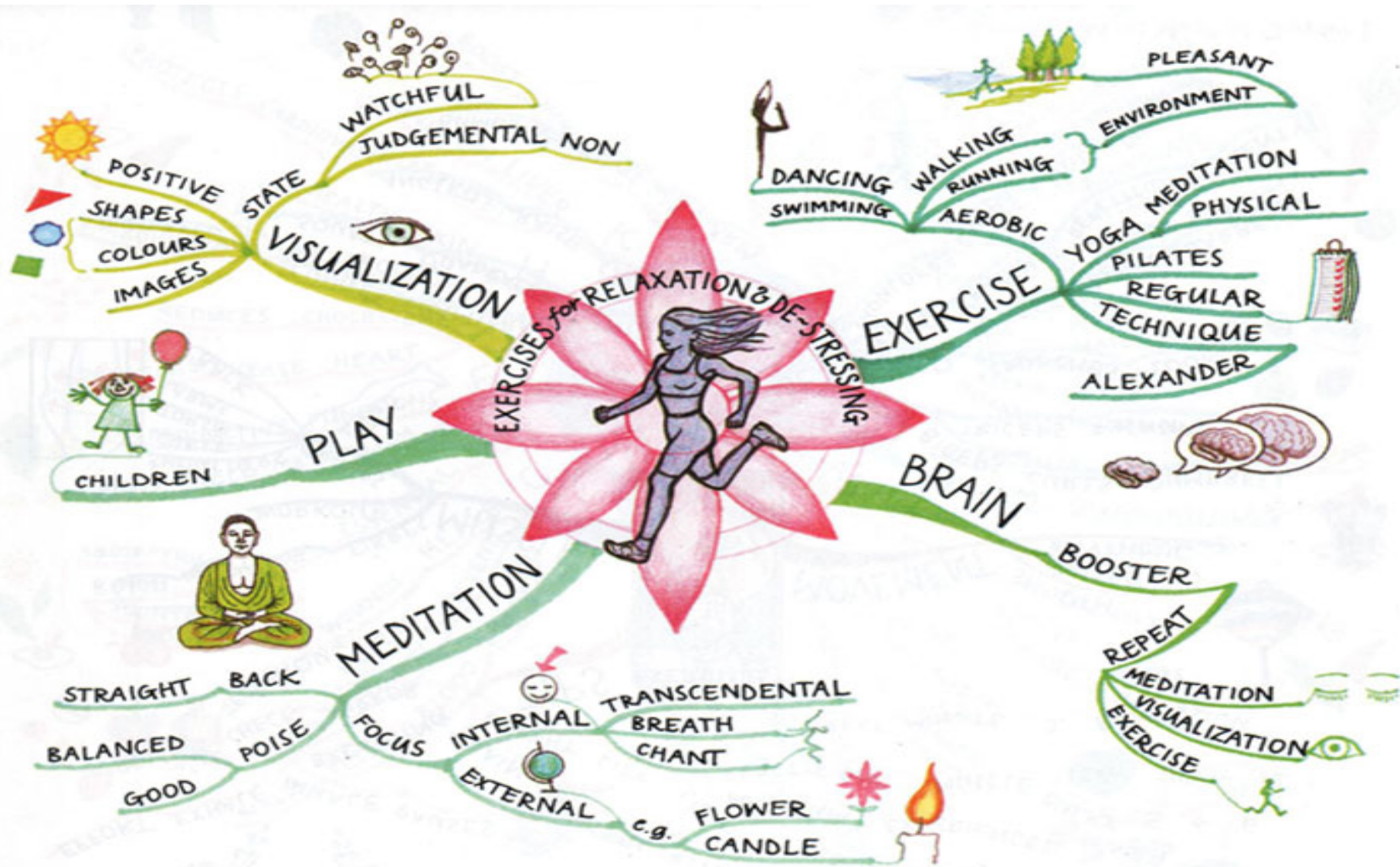
## Quick Start Guide

### 7 Steps to Better Thinking

1. Set your purpose/goal.
2. Start in the **CENTRE** of blank paper turned sideways.
3. Quickly sketch an **IMAGE** of your focus in the centre.
4. Use at least 3 **COLORS**, for emphasis, structure, texture, creativity.
5. Draw curved lines, radiating from centre (thick to thin) **CONNECTING** main branches to central image & at each level.
6. Use 1 key word or image per line for more power and flexibility in thinking.
7. Use images throughout as a picture paints a 1,000 words.

Drawn in [imindmap](http://imindmap.com)  
Go to [imindmap.com.au](http://imindmap.com.au)

Go to [buzan.com.au](http://buzan.com.au)



Source: [http://www.buzan.com.au/images/EnergyMindMap\\_big.jpg](http://www.buzan.com.au/images/EnergyMindMap_big.jpg)