

HOW TO MIND MAP A Guide for Teachers



Mind Maps are the ultimate organisational thinking tool. They are the easiest way to put information **into** your brain and to take information **out** of your brain as they literally 'map out' your thoughts.

There are seven simple steps to make a Mind Map:

1. Central Idea

Start by creating a central idea – this will define the theme of your Mind Map.

This should ideally be an image as images have much greater impact than words. Images help your imagination and keep your mind focused. You can choose between a selection of iMindMap™ images or you can import your own.

iMindMap™ allows you to add a short text label as well as your image if desired.

2. Add Primary Ideas

You next need to add your main ideas and thoughts to your Mind Map. Using your mouse and the Predefined Branch drawing tool [defaulted as ON] you can create your first branch by clicking and dragging.

You will see that the branch you have created is curved and organic looking. This is where iMindMap™ clearly differentiates itself from other Mind Mapping software which typically use straight lines.

Straight lines equate boredom, which means that your brain is not absorbing the information fully and is not stimulated to creatively think. Curved, organic branches reflect branches of a tree, or the structure of your brain, allowing you to think naturally. The iMindMap™ curved lines will inspire your mind!

Branches can be created by your mouse and the Predefined Branch tool; automatically using the SpeedMapping Mode, or freehand using the Freehand Branch Mode and the tracing of your mouse or pen on a tablet PC / Interactive Whiteboard.

3. Use Colour

An intrinsic part of Mind Mapping is colour. Colour therefore plays an important role in iMindMap™. Colours are as exciting to your brain as images. They both add extra vibrancy and life to your Mind Map and also bring energy to your creative thinking.

You will notice each of your main branches will be given a different colour via the AutoColour tool. Using specific colours in this way acts as a code for your main topic areas and helps you to remember them more easily.

4. Use Key Words

Once you have created your branch you can add a text label. It is important that you try and only use one **key word** here. This is essential because single words provide power and flexibility to your Mind Map. A single word will generate an array of associations and connections, these will then help your mind spark off new ideas and thoughts. Phrases or sentences tend to disengage your mind's natural triggers.

iMindMap™ attaches your key words directly onto your line which is essential to help your brain make the connection with the rest of your Mind Map.

iMindMap™ lets you attach notes to any of your branches and it is here that you can add further information or data if needed. Simply click on the Notes icon on the drawing toolbar to add any notes. Remember, use notes to keep your branches simple and uncluttered.

5. Use Images

You can also start attaching images... Because images have so much impact, the more you use the better! You can attach images to any branch using images from the iMindMap™ image library, the icon library or even importing your own.

An even better way to Mind Map is to try and use images instead of words on your branches.

6. Make Connections and Associations

Connections are now what will form your Mind Map. From your central idea and then your first main branch, your brain will start making connections.

These connections will start forming the rest of your main branches and then your second level branches and then third level branches etc. This is because your brain works by association. It likes to link two (or three or four) things together. If you connect branches and therefore ideas, you will understand and remember a lot easier.

7. Strengthen your Associations

A final way to strengthen your connections is to use some of the Mind Map tools that iMindMap™ provides.

Relationship arrows help you connect two ideas together that do not appear on the same branch. These automatically guide your eye to the connecting themes reinforcing their relationship.

Highlight clouds allow you to emphasize a specific topic or theme that you would like to stand out. They can also help gather information together, this is known as ‘chunking’.

Codes are also extremely useful to make instant connections between different parts of your Mind Map. They enhance categorisation, save time and can even replace words as bold iconic statements. The *iMindMap™ Icon Library* is a perfect resource to find suitable codes.

You are now Mind Mapping - you should now be able to start planning, communicating, problem solving, concentrating, organising and remembering better, more efficiently and more effectively!