Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is a pre-writing (or study and review) strategy that will help you organize your ideas. (Also called ‘webbing.’)

One prewriting strategy that you may use to get some ideas down on paper is brainstorming: jotting ideas down as quickly as you can think of them. The problem with unstructured brainstorming is that you may end up with a hodge-podge of writing that you can’t make sense of.

Mind-mapping will help you organize your thoughts.

It will also help you to develop your OWN ideas so that you don’t fall into the trap of simply saying what you think your instructor wants to hear. As you brainstorm ideas, you are free to push your thinking — What do you already know about the topic? What more can you think of related to it?

Mind-mapping will help you see the inter-relationship between ideas. For example, as you note a point, you may think of a question that arises from it, or a point related to it on a separate but attached branch. A general point may develop into several more specific points, or examples may illustrate or clarify a point you wish to make. These can each be separate branches.

Mind-mapping can help you to reduce your topic to a manageable breadth. As you list more and more ideas, you may find that the topic is too broad to cover in a single paper. The mind map shows where you have the most information or questions to begin your research, compared to some branches that don’t really lead anywhere.

Look at the sample mind map on the reverse of this sheet. Note how the topic in the centre is probably too broad to cover in a 5 or 6 page essay. There are many points, each of which could be developed in considerable detail. As you enter ideas in the web, you are reminded of examples or questions to guide further research. Different categories of ideas seem to develop organically. The separation of different sub-topics emerges, together with a sense of how they inter-relate.
Place your topic in a cell in the centre of your page.

In the area around the topic, write down ideas and thoughts about the topic as you think and ask yourself questions about it.

Topic: Living in Winnipeg

- Nice to watch the seasons change: extremes of weather.
- Hard to find anybody really working
- Summers are short but lovely
- Extreme weather changes are hard on roads
- Driving can be a pain—winter and road construction
- Problems with aging infrastructure
- Active arts community: ballet, WAG, WSO, small indep galleries, writers of some note, famous architecture
- Popular location for Hollywood—turn of the century archit.
- Lots of ethnic variety: festivals, different ethnic communities throughout the city, restaurants
- Wpg is the coldest city on earth w/pop'n over 1/2 mill.
- Crime
- poverty
- some serious inner city problems
- Long bitter winters
- Young people complain that their futures seem limited - a small-town mentality
- Not exciting—no night life, few world-class entertainers
- Gorgeous prairie sky
- Surrounded by natural features
- Fishing, swimming, hiking
- Beaches, woodlands, rivers
- Healthy economy compared to other areas of the country—diversified
- Relatively affordable: low taxes, stable housing prices
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