

# Mind Mapping Crash Course: Guidelines, Process, Use

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## Mind Mapping Crash Course: Guidelines, Process, Use

There is more to a map than its shape and format. One of the main purposes of mapping is to allow us to capture all the thoughts and information that comes to us in random, 3-dimensional order as quickly as it comes, so that later we can convert it into a linear, usable format. When mapping, it's helpful to follow these **guidelines**:

- Write just a key word or two, not long phrases or sentences
- Write everything that comes to mind, it is brainstorming
- Be random, you can organize later

The **process** of mind mapping goes like this:

- Start in the center with the name or an image of the topic
- Dump all thoughts in random order around the circle
- Look at the items and subgroup like things with like, creating subtopics
- Flesh out each subtopic
- Arrange in a useable order starting at 1:00 and working clockwise

- Convert the map to its final format: Document, Presentation, Task List, Gantt Chart, etc.

Your brain can only hold onto 7 plus or minus 2 things at a time, so map every time you catch yourself staring at a blank surface (an indication that you are already mentally mind mapping anyway). **Use Maps to:**

- Organize Thoughts – Just like you need a scratch sheet to figure a math problem, use mind maps as the interim step that takes ideas into actions, thoughts into plans
- Plan Documents, Presentations, and Conversations – Isn't it easier to organize your thoughts *outside* your head where you can see them?
- Overcome Worry and Anxiety – Your head is ruled by emotion. Dump concerns out on a map to see them objectively and create plans for handling genuine issues
- Take Notes – When we take full-sentence notes, our brains think, "I don't need to remember this; I have it written down." Writing in maps also allows you to capture information in the order it was presented while simultaneously arranging it in the order you will need to use it – no more re-copying
- Accomplish Projects and Goals – People cannot do projects, they can only do tasks. Mind map to break projects down into categories, then smaller projects, then actionable tasks – great for procrastination

- Make Lists – Keeping things in your head is an inefficiency. Mind maps create a visual that is easy to recall even when the list is not in front of you
- Create Databases and Spreadsheets – The point of putting items in rows and columns is to organize them, so plan the layout based on who will be using it and to what end

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