

## Mind Mapping

### Workshop 3

After successful completion of this workshop you will be able to:

- Distinguish between mind-mapping and other forms of note-taking through sighting examples of mind-maps used by other university students.
- Demonstrate your understanding of mind-mapping through construction of your own mind-map in the workshop.
- Explain the role of mind-mapping in at least one of the possible areas of relevance to your specific needs, such as in organising assignments, preparing for essays, reading/listening and note-taking and exam preparation



[www.jcu.edu.au/learningskills](http://www.jcu.edu.au/learningskills)



## Introduction

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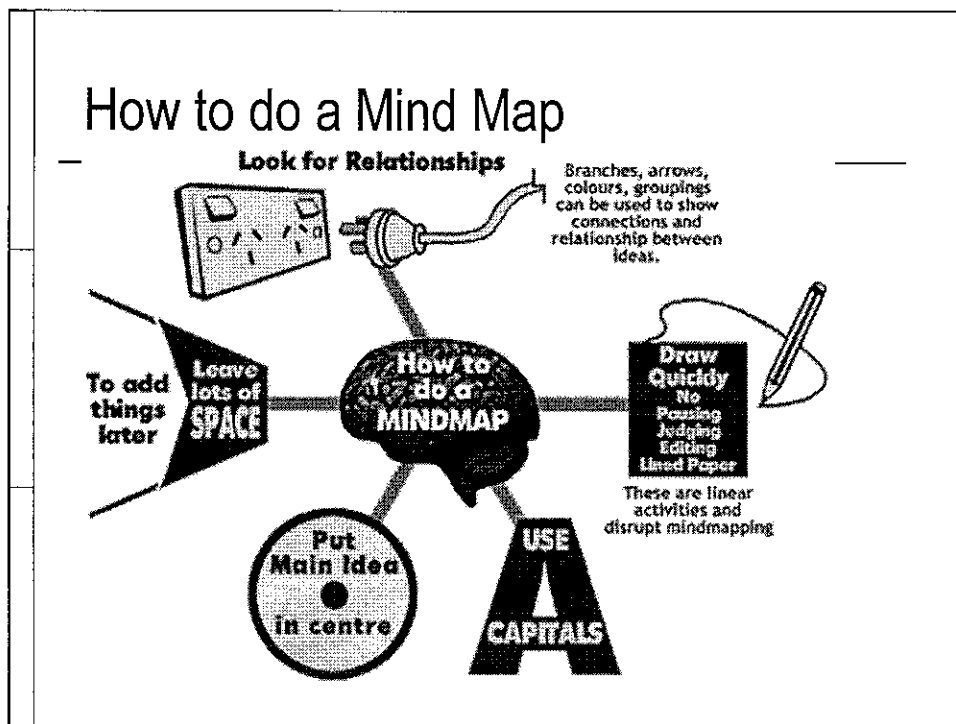


- ❑ How to do a Mind Map
- ❑ More about Mind Mapping
- ❑ Essay Preparation
- ❑ Summarising Readings
- ❑ Lectures, Seminars, Workshops and Tutorials
- ❑ More Information

Mind maps are tools which help you think and learn. This module describes how to do a mind map and most of the sections are organised into areas of university study where students have found mind maps useful.

Mind mapping (or concept mapping) involves writing down a central idea and thinking up new and related ideas which radiate out from the centre. By focussing on key ideas written down in your own words, and then looking for branches out and connections between the ideas, you are mapping knowledge in a manner which will help you understand and remember new information.

Have fun with mind mapping and don't forget that there are several online modules relating to learning and organisational skills at [www.jcu.edu.au/studyskills/online](http://www.jcu.edu.au/studyskills/online)

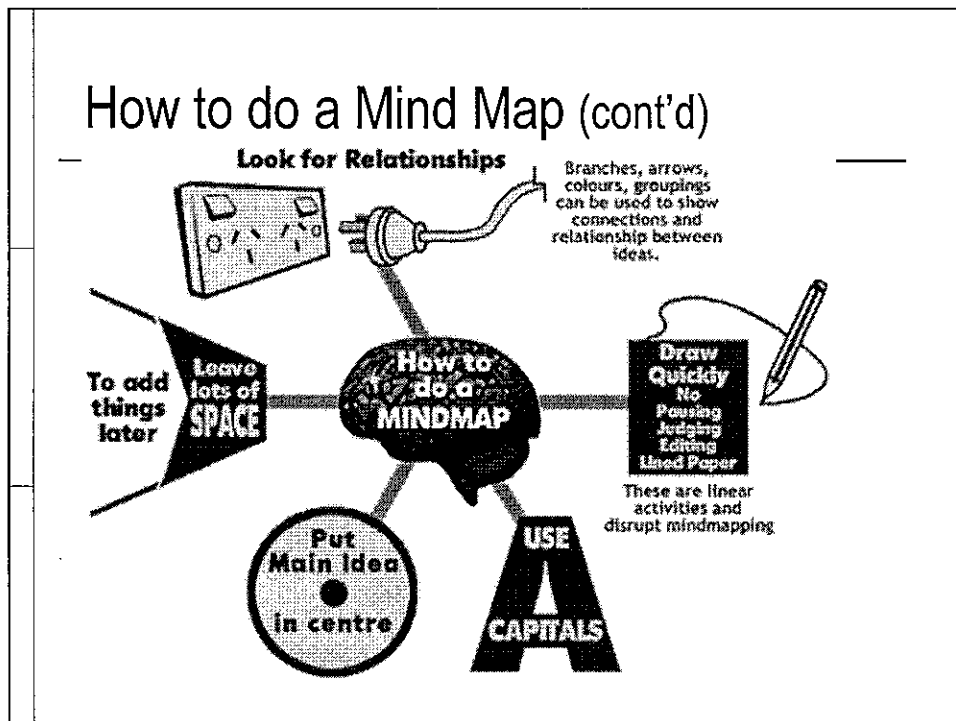


### Look for relationships

Use lines, colours, arrows, branches or some other way of showing connections between the ideas generated on your mind map. These relationships may be important in your understanding new information or in constructing a structured essay plan. By personalising the map with your own symbols and designs you will be constructing visual and meaningful relationships between ideas which will assist in your recall and understanding.

### Draw quickly on unlined paper without pausing, judging or editing

All of these things promote linear thinking and the idea of mind mapping is to think creatively and in a non-linear manner. There will be plenty of time for modifying the information later on but at this stage it is important to get every possibility into the mind map. Sometimes it is one of those obscure possibilities that may become the key to your knowledge of a topic.



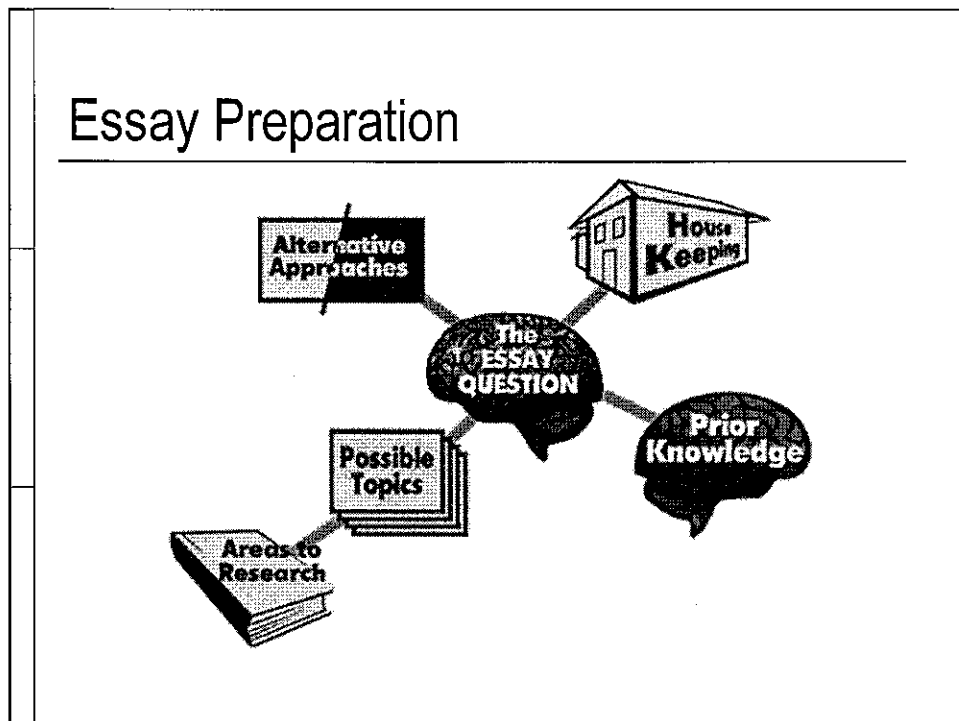
### Put main idea in the centre

Most students find it useful to turn their page on the side and do a mind map in "landscape" style. With the main idea or topic in the middle of the page this gives the maximum space for other ideas to radiate out from the centre.

### Leave lots of space

Some of the most useful mind maps are those which are added to over a period of time. After the initial drawing of the mind map you may wish to highlight things, add information or add questions for the duration of a subject right up until exam time. For this reason it is a good idea to leave lots of space.

## Essay Preparation



Mind maps can help you in the early stages of your essay by summarising your research and providing you with a picture of all aspects of the question. You can then move from your non-linear mind map to a more structured essay plan.

### **Housekeeping**

It is often useful to put down on the mind map various "housekeeping" details such as:

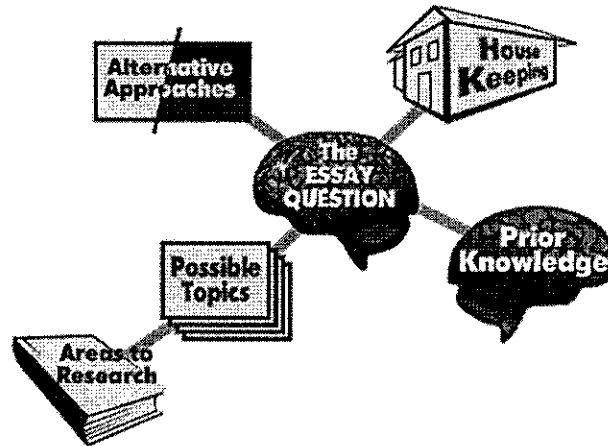
- assessment criteria and weighting
- due date
- timeline
- any other requirements

### **Prior knowledge**

You should always put down on your mind map all that you already know about the essay question. This knowledge may have come from personal experience, lectures, readings or other sources. You may be surprised how this part of the mind map branches out in lots of directions!

## Essay Preparation (cont'd)

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### **Possible topics to be covered**

Most essays will involve the possibility of tackling a number of topics within the question. Put all of these possible topics down. You may not have the time or length of essay to tackle all these topics, but getting them down and looking for connections, relevance and priorities is a good start.

### **Areas to research**

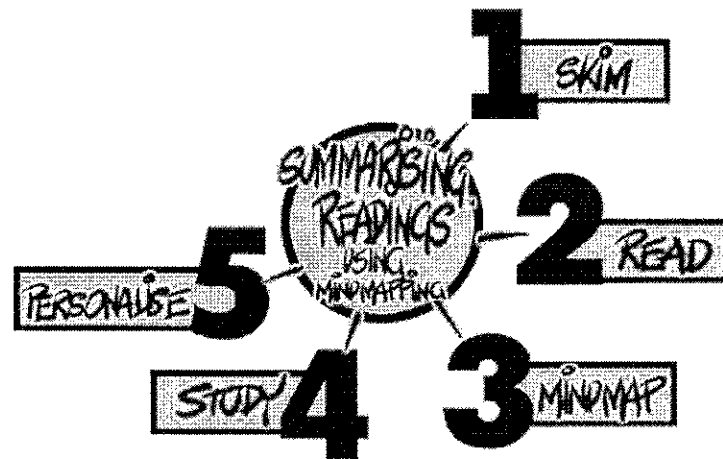
The areas to research will be suggested by the possible topics and from here your mind map may lead you on to various sources of information you will need to pursue. Often you will have to choose carefully which areas will be the most productive and relevant to research.

### **Alternative approaches**

One of the powerful things about mind mapping is that it is a tool which encourages creative thinking and often creative solutions to problems. Always look at alternative ways of approaching essay questions and always be prepared to be a critical researcher and writer who is prepared to go outside the normal boundaries!

## Summarising Readings

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Mind mapping can help you understand and remember the important issues in your readings. We suggest you follow 5 steps in creating mind maps which summarise your readings.

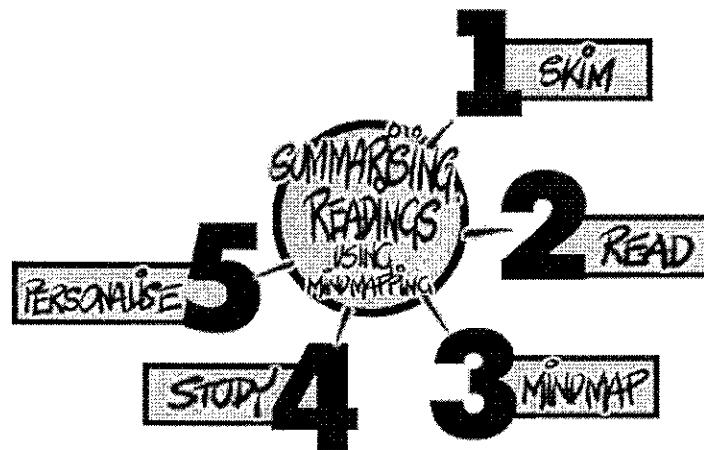
### 1. Skim

Firstly, read the abstract, introduction, conclusion, key headings or chapter headings. When skimming through the text observe any diagrams, pictures or graphs. This gives you an overview of what you are about to read, puts it in context and may already give you some clues as to where the most relevant parts are located.

### 2. Read

Read the article in one sitting (or chunk it into sections/chapters if it is a whole book) and go over any parts you are not quite sure of.

## Summarising Readings (cont'd)



### 3. Mind Map

It is important to do the mind map from memory at this stage so don't consult the article or any other source of information.

### 4. Study

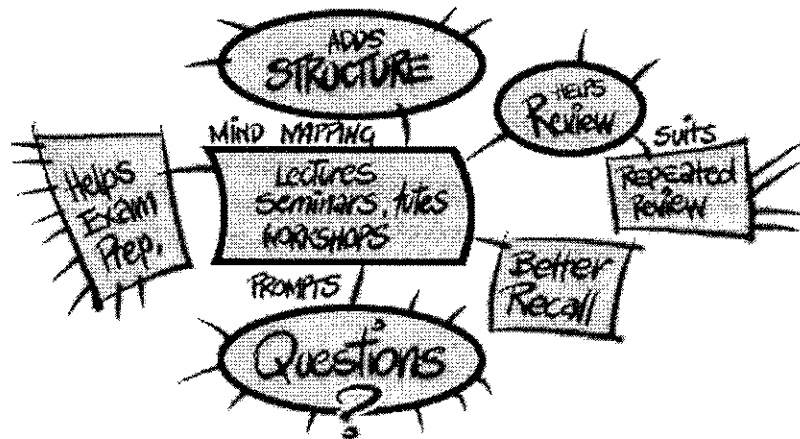
The mind map you have just done is very valuable as it will show both areas you have understood and also areas you are not sure of. Study your mind map to discover the gaps in your knowledge and refer back to the source material to fill in any of these gaps.

### 5. Personalise

Using different colours or symbols, add your own comments and questions to the mind map. Questions relating to relationships, implications, alternative approaches, usefulness, clarity, personal experience could all be considered at this stage. It is in this personalising stage where your mind map really starts to help you with your learning. The trick now is to address all those questions you have raised and to keep returning to your mind map with the answers!

## Lectures, Seminars, Workshops and Tutorials

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### Helps review

The open space of a mind map can allow you to revisit it in that first vital review after the session. It is in this first review that you can highlight key areas, gaps in your understanding and list questions that need to be addressed. Some students find it hard to consult a mind map during a lecture so they take standard notes in the lecture but construct a mind map afterwards in their first review of the lecture notes.

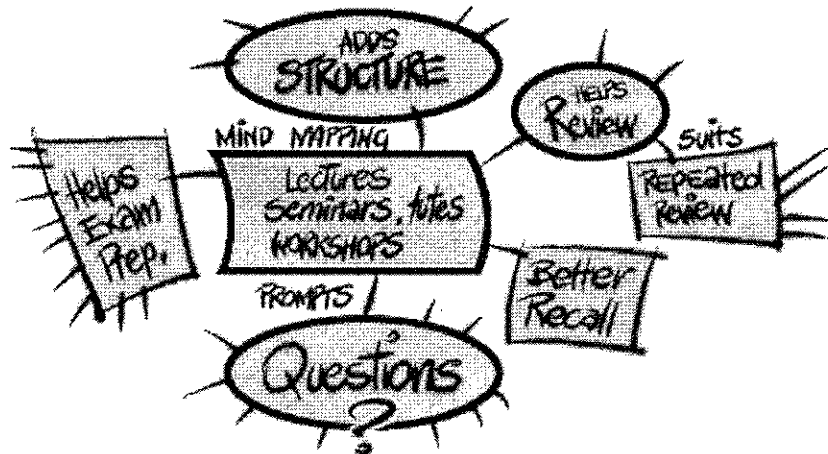
### Suits repeated reviews

By continually returning to your mind maps of these sessions you can use the empty space to add new information and to expand on your understanding of the work covered in the session.

### Better recall

By having all of the information covered in a session incorporated into a single mind map, many students find this an aid to them remembering what was covered.

## Lectures, Seminars, Workshops and Tutorials (cont'd)



### Prompts questions

Your mind map should raise some questions about the information you have received. These questions will need to be followed up on so it is important to develop your own set of symbols which will prompt further action by you.

### Helps exam preparation

Imagine how useful it would be if you had a set of mind maps for each of your lectures! These mind maps would show you the areas where you had difficulty and include the follow-up information you added in order to clear these problems up. You would also be able to construct a mind map of the entire subject prior to the exam and this would help you identify the key themes and likely exam questions.

## More Information

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For a full explanation of the mind mapping technique see:  
Buzan, T. (1991). *The mind map book*. New York: Penguin.  
There are a number of other books by Buzan and others on  
mind maps so it is worth checking out what is available in the  
Library

Some detailed notes, including references to relevant texts are located at:  
[http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/map\\_ho.html](http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/map_ho.html)

If you would like to try using mind mapping for summarising some text then you could read the  
passage at:  
<http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/class1.html>

You could then compare your mind map with the one located at:  
<http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/class1a.html>

The following site will allow you to download a trial software package called Inspiration which  
lets you create mind maps on your computer.  
[http://www.inspiration.com/general\\_biz.html](http://www.inspiration.com/general_biz.html)