

Mind map by Charles MacInerney and reproduced with kind permission from:
www.yogateacher.com/text/additionaltopics/mindmapping.html

Mind maps, like the scaled-down example shown above, can be used to represent information visually. The way information is organised on a mind map is quite different from traditional, linear notes:

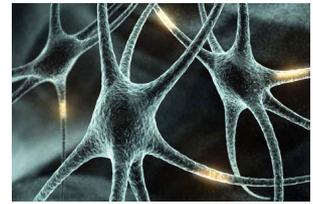
- Content spreads out from a main 'heading' in the middle.
- Individual bits of information are represented by just one or two key words, and by images.
- Individual bits of information are always connected to other individual bits of information.
- The size and style of text can be used to emphasise content.
- Colour can be used to show connections, to theme content and to make connections.

So what is the point of mindmapping? Turn over for more...

What is the point of mind maps?

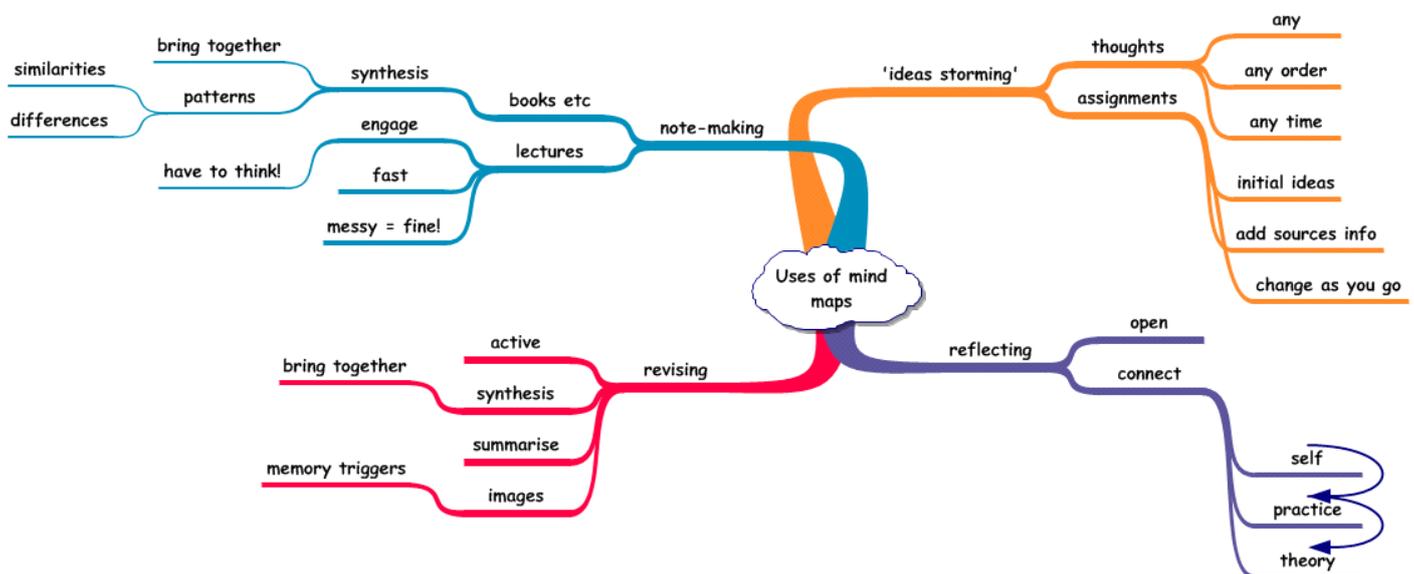
Mind mapping does not suit everyone. How useful the technique is for you depends on aspects of your own learning style. There is nothing intrinsically better about mind mapping than traditional note-taking techniques, but for some (perhaps many) people, the technique 'works' because:

- A mind map replicates, very simply, the way that connections are made between neurons (brain cells, right) in our brains. Some people find mind mapping more 'natural' than writing linear notes organised by headings.
- Actively deciding how content relates (i.e. what to connect with what) helps you to engage with and really think about a topic.
- A mind map allows you to have a constant overview of all parts of a topic, and thus to change or add to any part of it whenever you want.
- The images and other visual clues used on a mind map can help improve understanding and especially recall of the content.



What can mind maps be used for?

The mind map below shows some ways in which mind maps can be used for academic work. (It was created using *Inspiration* software, which is available on the University network.)



Mind maps do not need to be attractive. It is vital to remember that the *creation* of the map matters more than the final product.

Tuition in mind mapping is available from the Academic Skills Unit (ASK) at the Nuffield Centre.