

Hello, welcome to my podcast on mind mapping. If it encourages you to try your hand at mind mapping, then you will need to download this transcript as it begins by listing the reasons for mind mapping being a good study technique and is then followed by instructions on how to do it courtesy of [Tony Buzan](#), the doyen of mind mapping. On my website, Remember Word 4 Word, I will also add some illustrations.

In a study by Farrand, Hussain, and Hennessy (2002) they concluded that "Mind maps provide an effective study technique when applied to written material." They added the rider "However before mind maps are generally adopted as a study technique, consideration has to be given towards ways of improving motivation amongst users." This is something to bear in mind; students had difficulty adopting this method of note-making simply because it was unfamiliar, but please persevere and have fun with it, - it really does work for some of the following reasons:

- **It** mirrors the way your mind works, by making connections.
- **By** searching for a keyword, it forces you to search for the basic meaning in your information and ignore the 'padding'.
- **By** ignoring the 'padding' you are only focusing and learning what is relevant.
- **The** mechanical act of drawing is yet another way to help your brain remember.
- **Another** study showed that your brain remembers highlighted words.
- **Use** of colour and images is easier to 'see' for most people than the written word.
- **Number** the main branches and then you will have a strong image to help you remember what comes next.
- **Tie** your numbered branches to a mental Journey. Ideally use a journey that you do physically so that when you do make it in the real world, you can recap your keywords at your chosen focal points.
- **Mind** mapping a book is particularly easy as the author will have helped by giving you chapter headings which will be the salient points of the subject which has already been picked out for you.

Tony Buzan who has done much to popularize mind mapping, suggested the following guidelines for creating mind maps:

- **Start** in the centre with an image of the topic, using at least 3 colours.
- **Use** images, symbols, codes, and dimensions throughout your mind map.
- **Select** keywords and print using upper- or lower-case letters.
- **Each** word/image is best alone and on its own line.
- **The** lines should be connected, starting from the central image. The central lines are thicker, organic, and thinner as they radiate out from the centre.
- **Make** the lines the same length as the word/image they support.
- **Use** multiple colours throughout the mind map, for visual stimulation and to encode or group.
- **Develop** your own personal style of mind mapping.
- **Use** emphasis and show associations in your mind map.
- **Keep** the mind map clear by using radial hierarchy, numerical order, or outlines to embrace your branches.

I usually recommend hand-drawn mind maps as the act of drawing is a further aid to memory and a fun exercise for the right brain. However, I make an exception in the case of actors or people who need to learn substantial amounts of text word for word.

In this case, they may find the software developed by Buzan useful for the following two reasons:

- **In** the 'Ultimate' version there is a facility called 'presentation mode facility' which means you can test yourself in a very cool way as the screen stays blank and each line only appears at the touch of a button. You guess what comes next, press the button, and see if you are right.

- **The** same version includes 'a recording facility' and again at the press of a button, you can hear a recording of yourself saying the piece on the appropriate line. Hearing is another of those senses, and hearing your own voice is particularly powerful. However, for normal learning avoid computer mind mapping. It is too easy to cut and paste notes instead of searching for a keyword and really being aware of all its associated meanings as you print it on the branch.

On my site Remember Word for Word I will add an image of a Mind Map and a second image in my next Podcast covering how to remember Word for Word.

I must emphasize the value to the memory of the mechanical act of putting pen to paper versus typing as information is registered more acutely in the brain.

This has been acknowledged for several years and in a recent study Japanese researchers suggest handwriting even compared to handwriting with a stylus on a tablet leads to greater brain activity and memory retention. The hypothesis is that writing on paper gives richer tactile and spatial details which could enhance the encoding of information in the brain. If you close your eyes to visualise something you have just written, you can 'see' the words, the drawings, the extra notes, the doodling – it gives more concrete clues for the hippocampus to store – so give mind-mapping a go, it will be something colourful to stick on the fridge.

#### Alternative to Mind-Mapping

However, to write everything down by hand is time-consuming and retrieving the information is more complicated than using a computer and so if you have a huge amount of information to remember, there follows my alternative to mind-mapping. Not so good, and not so much fun – but more time efficient.

1. I use a simple question-and-answer spreadsheet under a numbered file, which I number and then name from one of the headings I have already classified.

2. I confine my files to 10 questions as (like a mind-map) too much information and the subject becomes unwieldy and requires too much time and patience to complete all the questions. That means too much time before you can put it away for a day, week, or month before looking at it again.

If you feel the need for more information, you can attach a note to the question (review/notes) which you can glance at by highlighting with the cursor (review/notes/edit) or add additional facts at the end of the document.

On my website, I give an example of a file based on History. There I have added details that I do not choose to memorize but which I think are interesting or harbingers of future events – for example, when Cromwell first entered parliament. I also added headings of prominent people, notable events, or wars and link them to the internet for more information.

3. Too much information is an error that many students make with mind maps or notes in general. This enthusiasm is great, but it can lead to boredom – which is the major enemy to study.

Keep your files concise. You will also find that the exercise of devising 10 questions around the subject will cut out all superfluous information, leaving you with core facts to memorise.

So Mind Maps are great and if you are interested go to one of the Tony Buzan books and see some great examples of them. In my next podcast, I will explain my system of Remembering Word for Word, which I developed because I wanted to remember famous quotes and poetry and which I then taught in workshops and privately to many actors. It's a great reason to Use it and not Lose it.