

Introduction to Concept Mapping

A concept map is a graphical representation of a person's knowledge about a topic. Concept maps are pictorial essays, a method of illustrating the principal concepts of a topic from the main points. They include the supporting information that indicates the organization of the ideas. Good concept maps force their creators to challenge their own understanding and to integrate their knowledge. Concept maps will vary from person to person; no two will be alike. They allow for creative thinking in their construction. Concept maps have two principal components:

1. Terms or concepts - often presented in boxes;
2. Directional links (arrows) and linking phrases (prepositions) - that connect the terms.

How to make a Concept Map

1. **Select a few key terms.** Identify 3-6 primary terms that you can use to form the spine or center of the concept map.
2. **Organize the key terms** . Place the key terms in a logical order starting with the most significant term. Draw arrows between terms and write a brief phrase to link the terms together.
3. **Choose secondary terms.** Identify additional terms that are related to the key terms.
4. **Organize the secondary terms** . Draw arrows from key terms to the relevant secondary terms and include a linking phrase. Continue to add terms and linking phrases until the topic is complete.
5. **Add cross-links** from one part of the concept map to another. Creating cross-links between initially discrete sets of terms illustrates the recognition of broad connections within a topic.