

MIND MAP

When can the method be used?

With a Mind Map you can map all the relevant aspects and ideas around a theme, bringing structure and clarity to a problem. It provides an overview and is especially useful for identifying all the issues and sub-issues related to a problem. Mind Maps can also be used for generating solutions to a problem and mapping their advantages and disadvantages. A Mind Map can be used in different stages of the design process, but is often used at the beginning of idea generation. Drafting a Mind Map helps you to structure thoughts and ideas about the problem, and connect them to each other. However, a Mind Map can also be used in the problem analysis phase of a design project. Mind Maps are also effective for outlining presentations and reports. In fact, Mind Mapping can be used in a wide variety of situations.

How to use the method?

Mind Mapping is an excellent technique for developing your intuitive capacity. The main branches of a Mind Map are the solutions. Each has sub-branches, presenting the pros and the cons of that particular solution. Making Mind Maps is a skill that can be trained. Because the Mind Map is supposed to help you to analyse the problem, do not limit yourself when writing everything down. When working in groups, it is also helpful to separately make Mind Maps and discuss them together so that you are all on the same page.

Possible procedure

STEP 1

Write the name or description of the theme in the centre of a piece of paper and draw a circle around it.

STEP 2

Brainstorm each major facet of that theme, placing your thoughts on lines drawn outward from the central thought like roads leaving a city.

A Mind Map is a graphical representation of ideas and aspects organised around a central theme, showing how these aspects are related to each other.

STEP 3

Add branches to the lines as necessary.

STEP 4

Use additional visual techniques – for example, different colours for major lines of thought, circles around words or thoughts that appear more than once, connecting lines between similar thoughts.

STEP 5

Study the Mind Map to see what relationships exist and what solutions are suggested. Reshape or restructure the Mind Map if necessary.

Limitations of the method

- A Mind Map is a subjective view of a project or subject – essentially it is a map of *your* mind. It is an effective tool when you are working on your own. It is also suitable for use in small teams, though the author may have to provide additional explanations.

Tips & Concerns

- You can find software for Mind Mapping on the Internet. The disadvantages of using computer software are that it slightly limits your freedom compared to working with hand drawings and colours, is less personal, and might be less suitable when sharing the Mind Map with others.
- Make it look good: use drawings, colours, pictures, et cetera.
- You can keep adding elements and thoughts to your Mind Map.
- Vary the type and spacing.
- Use short descriptions instead of long sentences.

