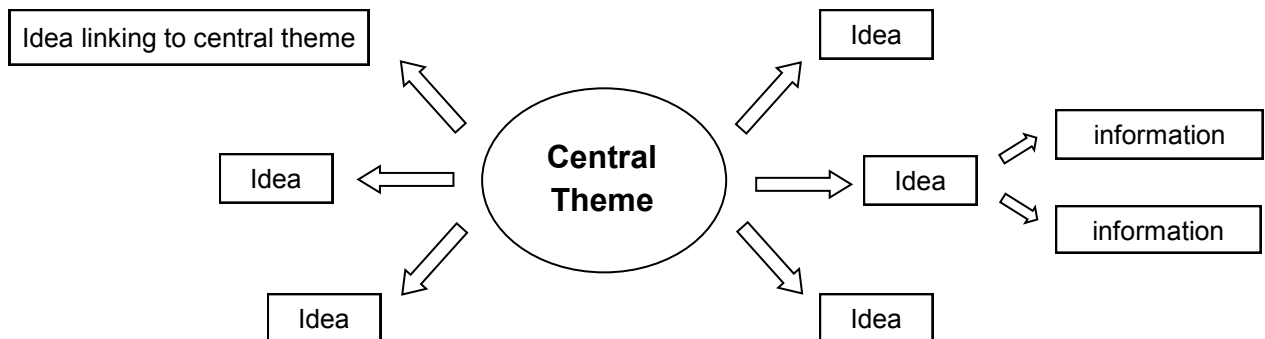


## What is mind mapping?

Mind maps are a great way of organising your thoughts, especially if you are a visual learner. Just like a road map helps you on a journey, a mind map can help you get from the start to the finish of a project or essay in an organised efficient manner without getting lost along the way. Mind mapping is a way to represent ideas and concepts in a picture form. By focusing on key ideas and looking for links between them, you can 'map' knowledge that will help you better understand, retain and organise information. They are often used just to 'brainstorm' a topic but they can become a powerful tool to help organise assignments and plan essays.

## What does a mind map look like?

Making a mind map is only limited by your own creative genius. However, there are two common templates that are often used. The first is a thought bubble template that is more circular thinking and suits people who process thoughts a little randomly. It involves placing a central theme in a bubble near the centre and then placing new and related ideas or information radiating out from it. Information that links to those ideas can then be added in more bubbles (squares, lines, or whatever).

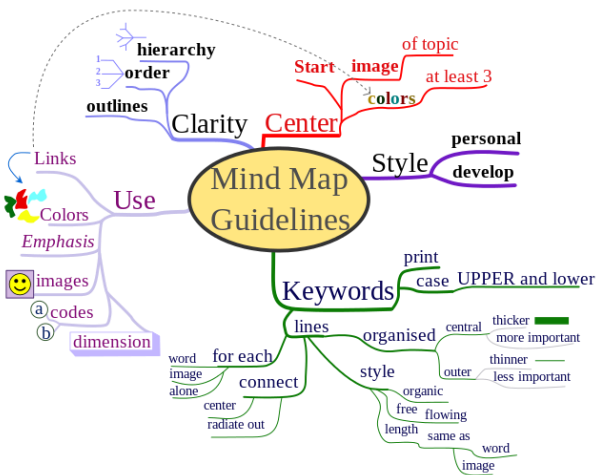


The second type is an outline template which is a more traditional form of organising ideas and suits people who are more linear in their thinking.

- + Main idea
  - + First subtopic
    - Detail 1
    - Detail 2
    - Detail 3
  - + Second sub topic
    - Detail 1
    - Detail 2
  - + Third sub topic
    - Detail 1
    - Detail 2
- Conclusion

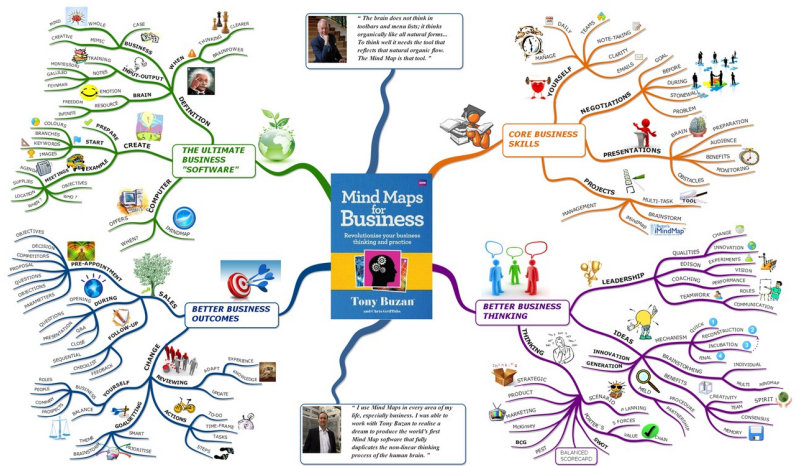
Note - Using the outline view in Microsoft Word is a good tool to mind map in this way.

A simple mind map could look like this



Mind map of the mind map guidelines. Nicoguardo. (2011). Via Wikipedia Commons. Used under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license.

A more complicated mind map could take this form



Mind maps for business. <http://mindmapping.bg>. (2013). Via Wikimedia Commons. Used under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license.

Note - Using **colour** can add to the effect by symbolising different things like importance, order, reminders etc..

## The benefits of using a mind map

Mind mapping helps you to:

- brainstorm ideas to help get you started on your assignment
- organise information that you can see at a glance
- see the big picture, or overview, of your assignment, project, or essay
- decide what information and resource material you will include in your assignment and where you will put it.

## How to create a bubble mind map

The important thing to remember is that you don't have to be an artist to create your own mind map. Everyone can draw bubbles and connect them with lines or arrows.

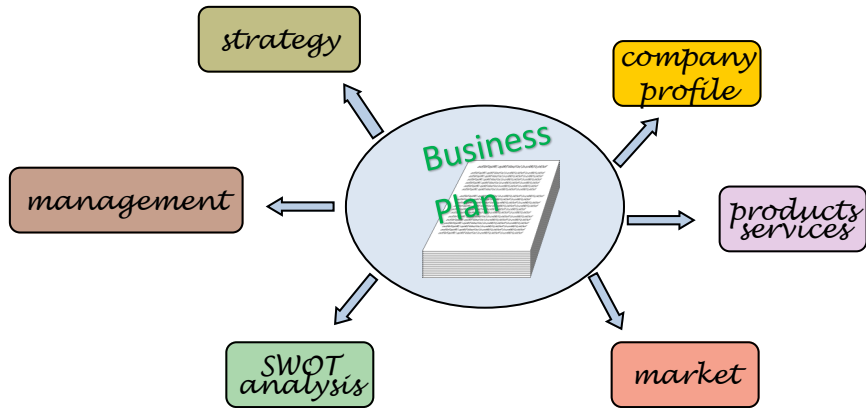
### Step one

Place the title of the main theme, or a draw a picture that represents it, in the centre of the page (landscape is better).



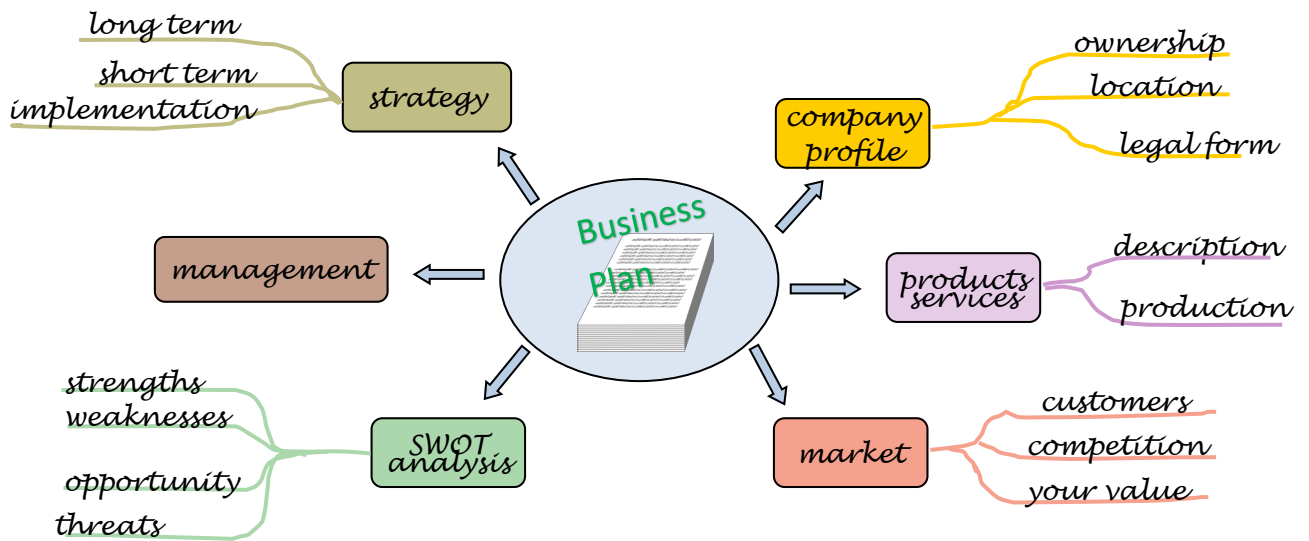
## Step two

Add main branches to the central theme by using lines or arrows that connect to other 'bubbles'. These lines show the connection between the two and help to organise your ideas. Each bubble should only contain one key word or idea that stems from the central theme. These could form the basis for each paragraph, section, or chapter of an essay.



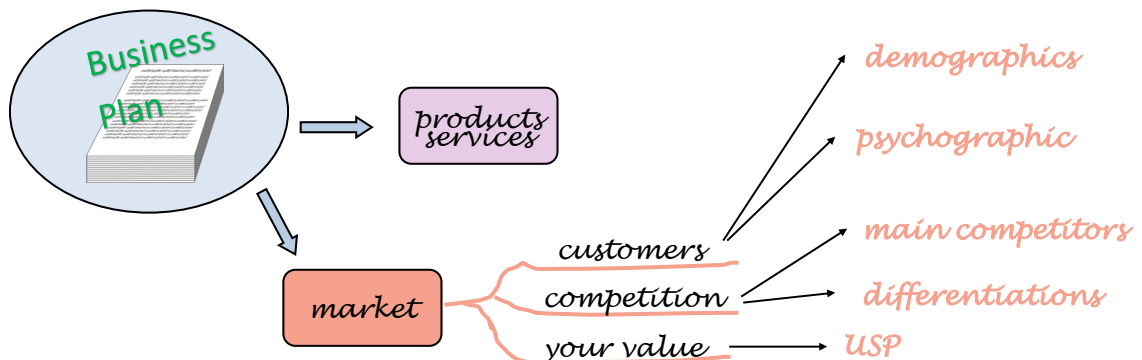
## Step three

Next add more detail by drawing smaller (sub) branches from your key words. This forms the basis for what you want to write about for each idea.



## Step four

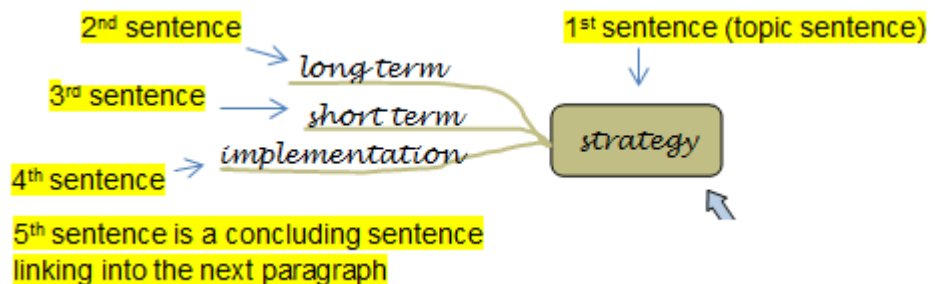
If you are doing a large project you may need to add even smaller branches onto your sub-branches to flesh out ideas even further.



## Turning a mind map into an academic essay

Once your mind map has been created you can use it as the plan, or framework, for writing an essay. Everything you need to write about is laid out in front of you. The topic you are writing about is what you placed as the central theme in your map. In your introduction you will describe what this is and also mention each sub-topic that will be discussed. The following paragraphs will contain all the information that you need to include (which you have already noted on your map). Remember, each paragraph should contain one idea or cover one aspect relevant to the central theme on your mind map.

Example paragraph using a mind map as a guide.



For a start-up business to be successful it is important to have both long and short term **strategies** that are achievable and well planned. The **long term** strategy for ACME Inc. is to create an efficient operating model that can then be franchised throughout the whole country. The **short term** strategy is to quickly become immersed in the local market in order to build up brand awareness and a customer base. These strategies will be **implemented** initially by the management team and then it is envisioned that an expert team, using outside advise, be created to implement the long term strategy of selling franchises. Setting up a competent **management** team who are all on-board with these strategies is critical to the success of this business.

The two types of mind maps that have been described can both be used to formulate an academic essay. The difference is the linear type will take you from the start to the finish of your essay in ordered steps, whereas in the bubble type you will have to decide on the order that each idea is discussed, and which information is included, within your essay.



For more information on mind mapping go [HERE](#)



To see many good examples of mind maps go [HERE](#)



To learn how to create a mind map using Microsoft Word go [HERE](#)



To watch a video on how to create a mind map go [HERE](#)



To download a free mind mapping program go [HERE](#)