



Concept mapping is an *active* study tool for visualizing material and making connections. Concept mapping only comes *after* you have read through your notes and the text.

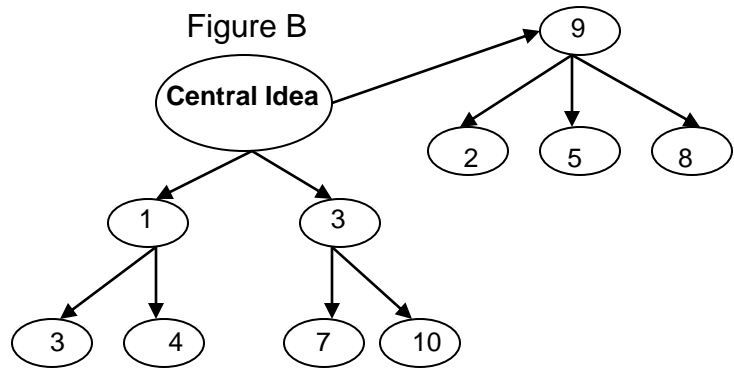
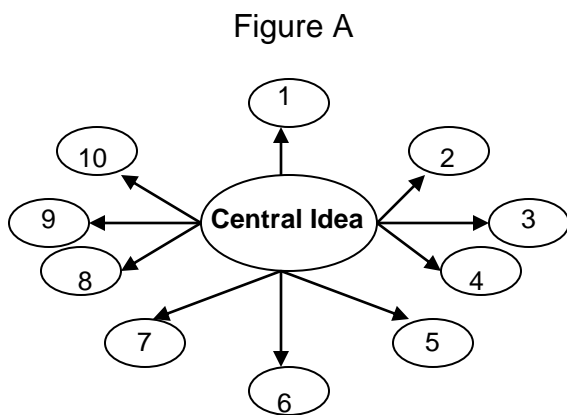
THE BENEFITS:

By creating concept maps every week for all new material:

- You will have a better understanding of the main topics in your course.
- You will be better able to make links between different elements in the course.
- You will remember more than if you simply recopy your notes.
- You will save time reviewing material at the end of the semester.

STEPS:

1. Make a list of keywords/ideas.
2. Organize the concepts into categories or subdivisions so that you have several lists or groups of ideas.
3. Determine the major topic and place it at the center of a blank sheet of paper (legal size paper works well.)
4. Draw branches out from the center and connect the central word/idea to other words/ideas. You can number the branches or even label them (if you label them, use words that describe the relationship between the two words/ideas you are linking.)
5. Keeping adding branches, but try to create structure within your map. Avoid having too many branches attached to a single concept → a concept that you relate to ten other concepts (Figure A) is more difficult for your mind to grasp than a concept that you relate to only three other concepts which then each relate to two or three other concepts (Figure B).



Which of these maps is more structured? Which one would help you organize ideas more clearly in your mind? Why?

6. Once you think you are finished, look again. Can you find even more connections between concepts that you overlooked the first time? Don't be scared to draw in large arrows, looping all around the page!
7. The more branches the better! It is the *thinking process* that is important, not the final look of the map.
8. Once you are done, compare your map with someone else's. Given the same set of concepts, two people are unlikely to create the same map. Discuss your process and your logic in making connections and building relationships. Together, you will surely uncover even more relationships.
9. Use your map as a review tool – you can easily summarize a whole chapter on one page! However, avoid simply memorizing it. If you understand all the *details* contained in your map, you will remember it without memorizing it.
10. If you have made several maps for different topics, try making one large map that encompasses all the topics (you might need a Bristol Board!). This will help you see relationships between different topics, and therefore help you learn about topics in context.

EXAMPLE:

You are given the following list of words:

SCHOOL, CABBAGE, HAPPINESS, PENCIL, TEACHER, TALK, CHILDREN, NUTRITION, BOOK, EXERCISE, MINERALS, SLEEP, PEN, PRINTER, VITAMINS, COMPUTER, HEALTH, GAME, PAPER, INK, MOUSE, VEGETABLE, SNORING, SMILE, JUMP, CHALK, SADNESS, TELEPHONE, NURSE

Draw a concept map relating all of these words to one another. Compare your map to someone else's. How are your maps the same/different?