

## Mindset Mind Maps

Hello, Consciousness Explorers,

In this project, you will be synthesising (combining and making sense of) the (hopefully!) extensive notes you have made so far this year in relation to **clarity** and **mindset** into a **mind map**.

We looked at some examples of mind maps last term, and you had some practice creating one in a group, synthesising the notes you took while watching *The Mind of a Chef*. You are also encouraged to do some independent investigation online to seek inspiration for your own work. Before we get to the steps, let's review the why's:

- **Why mind maps?** Because mind maps are a proven tool for increasing cognitive functioning. The act of making a mind map engages both sides of your brain, and therefore you create more pathways and hooks for the information you are exploring, which in turn leads to increased comprehension and increased retention. Mind maps are a great study tool, and they also are a great way of sharing information when you have free-choice for presenting projects, getting you away from the same old poster-board or PowerPoint.
- **Why start at the center?** Because starting in the center gives your brain more freedom to spread out in all directions and to express itself more freely and naturally.
- **Why use key words?** Because the process of narrowing down your work into key words engages your Critical Thinking skills and forces you to see how each idea or strand of information can be broken down into related parts. Key words also give your mind map more power and flexibility.
- **Why use an image for your main branch?** Because an image *is* worth a thousand words. Creating images activates the right-side of your brain by stimulating your imagination and your Creative Thinking. Also, creating and viewing images is more interesting to your brain than just writing words—it helps keep you focused, helps you concentrate, and gives your brain more buzz.
- **Why use color?** Because colors are as exciting to your brain as images. Color adds extra vibrancy and life to your mind map, it adds tremendous energy to your Creative Thinking, and, well, it's fun.
- **Why connect your branches and your sub-branches and your sub-sub-branches?** Because your brain works by association. It likes to link two (or three) (or four) (or five) (or—well, you get the point) things together. If you connect the branches, you will understand and remember things on a deeper and more permanent level.
- **Why make the branches curved?** Because nothing but straight lines is boring for your brain.

- **Why use images throughout?** Because each image, like the central image, is also worth a thousand words. So even if you only have ten images in your mind map, it's already the equivalent of ten-thousand words of notes!

My hope is that further our exploration into mind maps will do two things:

1. Help you personalize and internalize our on-going exploration of clarity and mindset, and in doing so increase your fluency in those skills.
2. Put another note-taking and knowledge-sharing tool in your toolbelt, so that you can use those skills again in the future. Mind maps can be done in the moment, while taking notes, and they are also impressive ways of demonstrating depth and breadth of knowledge. As discussed, they are also a highly effective study tool: I guarantee you that if you make a mind map of learning in a particular area before a test, you will do well on that test.

Please remember that we are acknowledging that these particular mind maps are works in progress: we are going to leave space on them to add new ideas throughout this school year, but even then they will not be complete because clarity and mindset are areas of life-long learning.

#### **Materials:**

- Paper of your choice
- Color – a different color for each sub-branch, and color for your images
- Your notes (can be added to throughout this process)

## Steps:

- Our Big Idea is Clarity and Mindset, or just Clarity, if you so prefer. Make a choice—or come up with your own way of expressing that Big Idea in key words. That word (or those words) will go in the center of your mind map.
- What image will best capture/represent that Big Idea?

## Organize Your Notes—*focus less on neatness here and more on organization*

- Create a new section in your comp book, or get some loose paper (and create a safe place to store it!).
- Read through your notes and make a list of your Maybe Ideas for your main branches. What are the main categories that naturally arise as you read through your work?
- Sort through your Maybe Ideas for branches and make your final list. Make a new page in you book for each branch.
- Go through your notes and sort the information into the appropriate branch, rewriting it on that page.
- Look through each branch page—what categories within each branch do you notice? These will become your sub-branches.
- Create a system for yourself that will allow you to further sort your information into groupings—this could be highlighters or color-coding, or it could be lists on each page or something else that makes sense to your brain.
- Continue this system of sub-grouping until you feel you are at the end of each branch—note that some ideas will only need one sub-branch; some will need many sub-branches to create the chain that breaks down the idea.
- Look back through your new notes and create the key word for each idea, remembering that sometimes you'll need to break down complex ideas into chains of key words.
- Look back through your new notes and ask yourself where might you need images to express complex ideas? Where will key words be impossible? Remember that images can include things like tables, charts, graphs, Venn Diagrams, symbols, etc.  
  
And, where might you need to use a quote? Do you know the source of the quote? If not, how will you find it?
- If you have not already done so, go through each branch and look for opportunities to personalize the information—what does this mean to you, in your life, right now? Add these ideas to your notes.

## Create Your Mind Map

- Make a rough sketch of your Mind Map—how many branches?

How much space does each branch need to contain its sub-branches?

What structure are you playing with?

What paper are you using and how much space do you have to work with?

Where/how are you leaving space for future learning?

- Build your Mind Map in pencil, starting from the center with your Big Idea.

Things to remember:

- All branches and sub-branches (and sub-sub-branches) need to connect, like a tree, or like neural pathways
  - Curve the branches
  - Give each branch an image
  - Challenge yourself to work with key words throughout
  - Where are you using an image to capture complex ideas instead of words?
- Add color—a different color for each branch (sub-branches are the same color as the branch they are connect to, unless your brain wants different colors for those, too).
  - When you are finished, reflect on each branch and on the Mind Map as a whole. What questions do you have of the information? Write those questions near to the information they are connected to or arise from.
  - Optional:* like with a web, connect ideas across the Mind Map.
  - You are done!

**Note:** you are *not* being assessed on your artistic ability. **Clarity of communication, thoroughness, depth of thought, and taking pride in one's work** are the key factors here.