

#LEARN_M  The icon consists of three overlapping red squares. The top square is slightly offset to the right, the middle square is slightly offset to the left, and the bottom square is centered. The bottom square contains a white plus sign.

Mind Maps

**How to Learn a Second language Fast –
with Mind Maps**

Session Outline

«You may not have known it, but you stand over a 99 per cent chance that your brain has been in a ‘non-Creativity’ prison from the time you started school to the time you are now reading these words».

Buzan, «The Power of Creative Intelligence», 2001

Introduction to Mind Mapping

The Mind Mapping Technique

The uses and application of Mind Maps

1. What is a Mind Map?

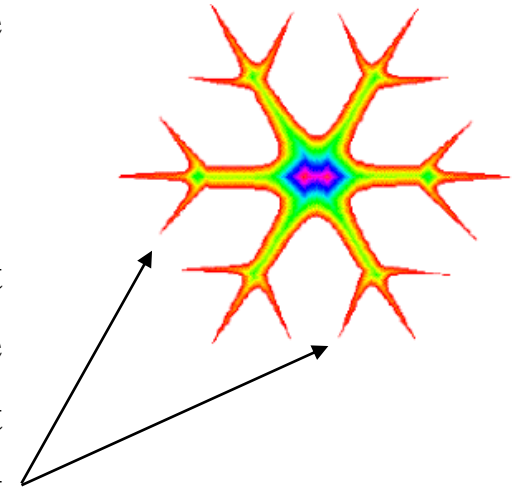
- ✓ A mind map is a diagram that organizes information in a **radiant structure** around a **single central topic or idea**.
- ✓ Instead of whole sentences, mind maps consist of **keywords, short phrases** and **images**.
- ✓ Mind maps also use **colors** and different font sizes to **highlight** ideas and make the whole map more **memorable**.

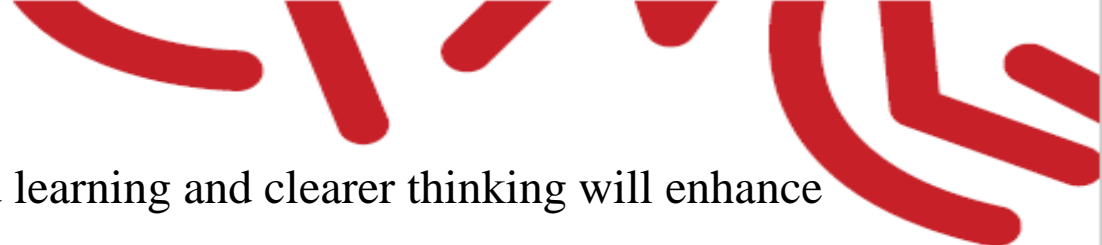
Radiant Thinking

«The Mind Map is an expression of Radiant Thinking and is therefore a natural function of the human mind».

Tony Buzan (1994)

Our brain consists of billions of neurons and each of these has hundreds of dendrites that connect with other neurons, creating an astronomical number of associations. This whole system reminds of a huge web, so while thinking our mind does not usually work in straight lines. Instead our mind is simply a network of connections we usually think in radiant associations. That is why sometimes tables or texts are not the best way to remember information, while mind maps copy the way our minds work and that is why they are much more helpful in memorizing information.






«The mind map can be applied to every aspect of life where improved learning and clearer thinking will enhance human performance».

Tony Buzan (1994)

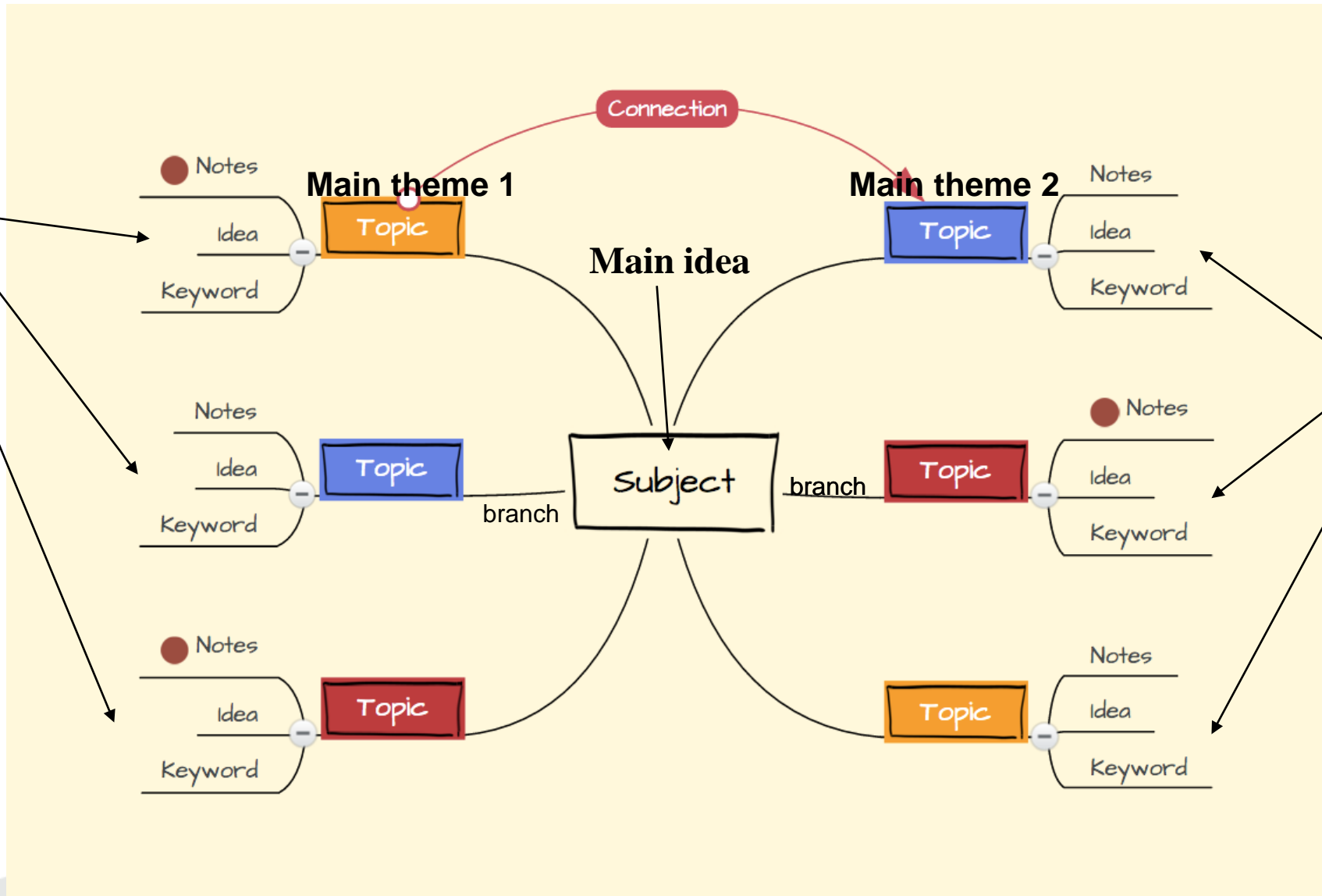
In other words, mind maps can be much more helpful than texts and tables in any aspect of learning. Since we think in radiant associations, wherever these connections take us, we can again find a multitude of associations going off from there. This concept allows us to break the boundaries for the flow of thoughts and free our creativity and imagination. For example, think of a situation where one has to perform a speech. They prepare the text and memorize it. If they forget one line, it will be difficult to remember where to continue from and the whole structure of the text will crush, leading to awkward pauses, panicking and losing the audience's attention. Since mind maps use key words and simple ideas and do not rely on heavy texts, it is easier to „jump“ from one association to another without worrying to forget something.



Characteristics

- The main idea is placed in a central image
- The main themes of the subject radiate from the central image as branches
- Branches show a key image or key word printed on an associated line
- The branches form a connected network
- Enrich Mind Maps with colour, pictures, codes which will aid creativity, memory and recall

Key images and key words



Key images and key words


2. The Benefits of learning with Mind Maps

- **Connect** the information. Understand the context and **attach meaning** to the information while you learn, and connect them to your **data of knowledge** that you already have. This process helps you to truly integrate new information in your system of knowledge and memorize it **long-term**.
- But that's not all. There is a whole range of advantages that make mind maps superior to traditional note taking techniques:
 - ✓ **Mental triggers:** The colors and images used in mind maps are **easier for our brain to remember**.
 - ✓ **Filtering of key information:** Mind maps help separate key concepts from unnecessary info.
 - ✓ **Bank of knowledge:** Mind maps provide space for both breadth and depth, the big picture and it's details.
 - ✓ **Analysis and synthesis:** Mind maps let you divide information into parts and combine them into a new whole.
 - ✓ **Flexibility:** Digital maps let you move and rearrange pieces of information freely.



3. How to Effectively Memorize Vocabulary with Mind Maps

When you first start learning a second language, one of the biggest challenges is getting all the vocabulary down. You might not need to know thousands of words to follow a basic conversation going and understand simple texts, but if you want to become fluent in a foreign language, there's no way around memorizing a lot of new words.



You might be familiar with this kind of vocabulary notebook, which is widely used in schools to this day.

Brother	[ˈbrʌðə]	Брат
Sister	[ˈsɪstə]	Сестра
Garden	[gɑːdn]	Сад
Food	[fuːd]	Еда
Cheap	[tʃiːp]	Дешевый
Family	[ˈfæmɪli]	Семья
Swim	[swɪm]	Плавать

In this kind of notebook, students simply add new words as they learn them, noting down their phonetic pronunciation as well as their translation in a three-column layout.

So what's wrong with this format?

There are two big problems with notebooks like this. First of all, the pages are incredibly boring and monotonous. There are no colors to emphasize things and no icons or pictures to help our brains remember. This makes it much harder for the learner to memorize the vocabulary.

The second problem is that this linear note taking format makes it impossible to create themed collections of words (such as food, clothing, pleasantries or cognates) and add to these collections whenever you learn a new word. Instead, your pages are filled with lists of mostly unrelated words, with no way for you to make out any connections or relationships between them.

Why mind maps work better

Mind maps – and specially digital ones – provide a much more practical approach for dealing with large quantities of vocabulary, as you can easily create themed collections and add new words to them wherever they thematically fit. Their radiant structure perfectly reflects the networks that form in our brain to connect individual ideas with each other.

Digital and online mind mapping software such as MindMeister (www.mindmeister.com) also enables you to store more detailed information about words in the form of notes and links. After signing in there is a step-by-step tutorial about how to create a mind map. First, you have to add a title which will represent the main idea of the mind map. Then you create related topics and add new branches. It is possible to drag the topics, change their order, color and style. The user can include not only images but even videos.

How to Create Themed Vocabulary Mind Maps

Step 1. Create a mind map for your vocabulary and add topics for each category, like «Food», «Clothing», «Directions», «Shopping» and so on. This map will function as your index map.



Sweets

Drinks

Vegetables



Russian Food Vocabulary

Meat

Meals

Fruit

Steep 2. Create a new sub map for each category and link back and forth between the sub map and the respective topic in your index map.

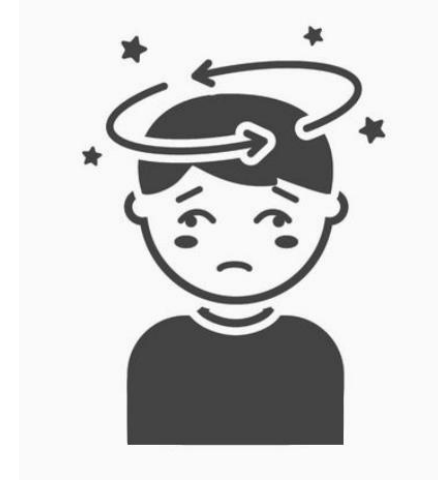
Steep 3. Create a basic structure in your sub maps. In your «Food» map, you could start by adding branches for the different kinds of food, such as «Fruit», «Vegetables», «Sweets» and so on.

Step 4. Now it's time to fill your map with vocabulary.

✓ Start by adding the words in your native language, then write the translation in sub topic next to it.

✓ Add a memorable **picture** or **icon** to the translation whenever possible. This will help you remember the translation more easily.

✓ Additionally, you can enrich your map by adding **associations** to each word as well as an **example sentence**. The more **context** you provide for the individual words, the easier it will be for your brain to remember them.

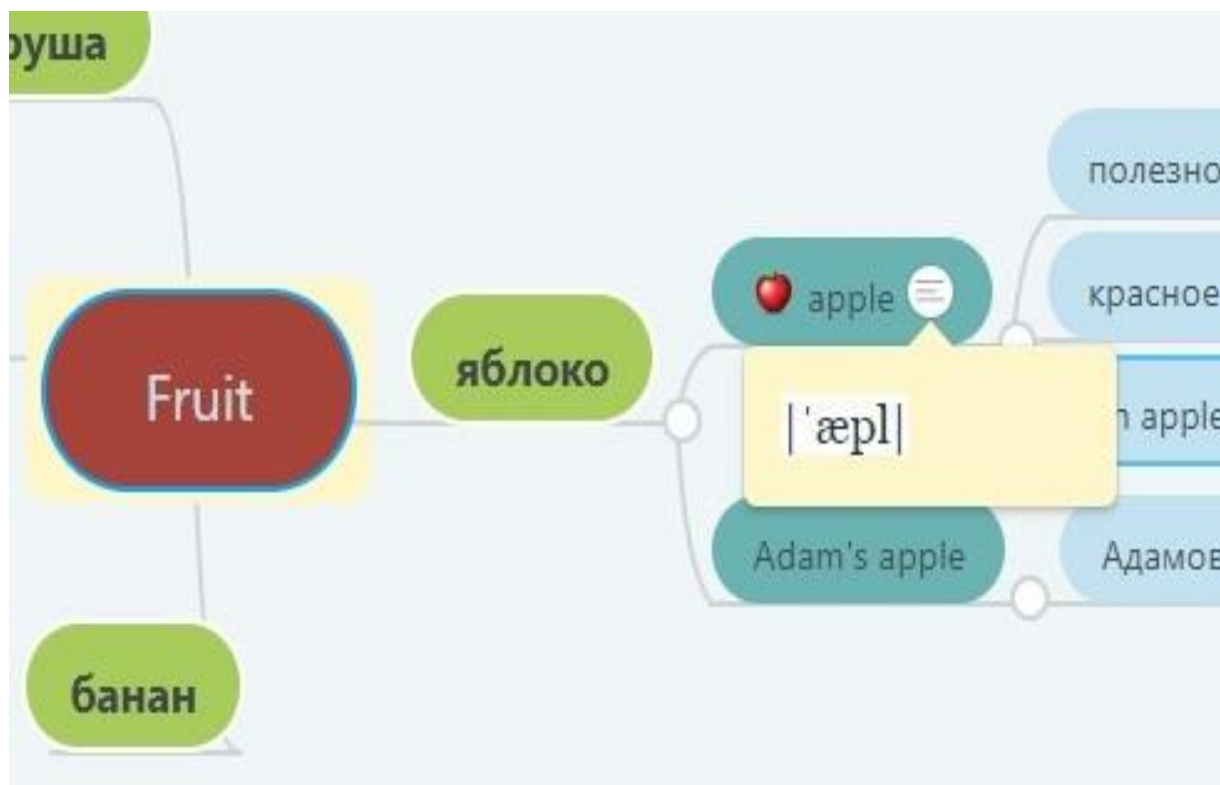


1.
Головокружение

2.
dizziness
[ˈdizɪnɪs]
[ˈдизинис]

3.
диск + зима



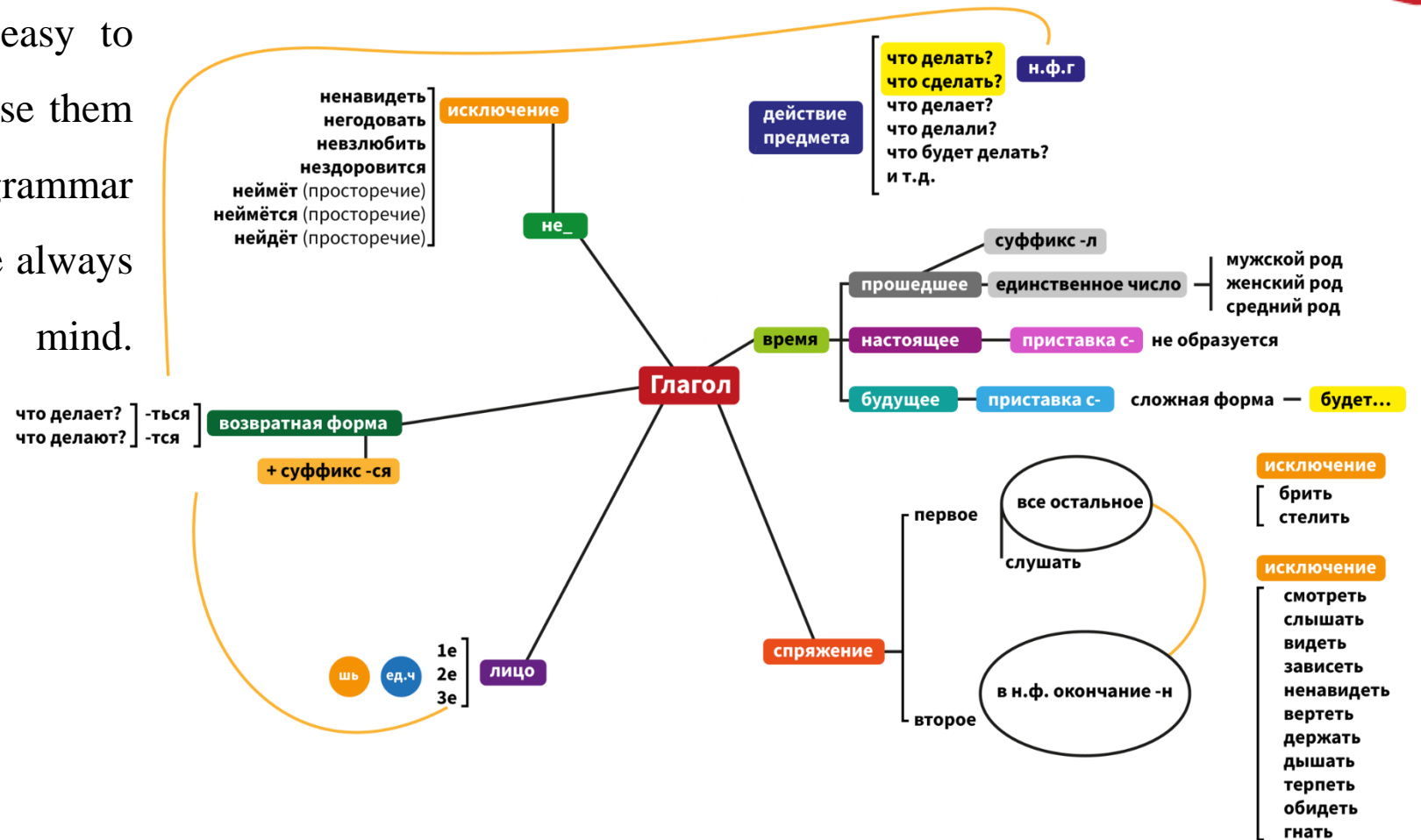


- ✓ Add the phonetic pronunciation and any other relevant explanations as a note to the translation. This way, you can view the information at will, but it won't clutter up the map itself.

4. How to Memorize Grammar Rules with Mind Maps

Memorizing all the grammar rules of a foreign language can be quite a challenge. Mind maps are a great format to collect all grammar rules in a central place. The biggest advantage of such grammar maps is the clear picture and structure they offer. With the help of grammar mind maps, you will be able to see all the rules, exceptions and examples connected to a specific topic in front of you. And just like we saw in the vocabulary mind maps above, you can add links to the branches in your map, connecting them to other mind maps you've created. This way, you can create a big network of mind maps, such as the following

With the help of this map it is easy to memorize all the related rules and use them in speech without referring to the grammar book. This is how grammar rules are always kept in your mind.



Let's Practice

- Place an image or symbol of yourself in the centre of your mind map.
- Use topics such as skills, education, family, friends, hobbies etc. to create the 'branches' of the map
- Use color, symbols

Effective Mind Mapping (Gelb 1988)

- Start the map by drawing a picture of the topic in the centre of the paper
- Use keywords
- Connect the words with lines radiating out from the central image
- Print the keywords
- Print one keyword per line
- Use colours, pictures and codes for emphasis
- Free associate, then organise