

Historica Canada Education Portal

Mind Mapping

Overview

A mind map is a visual note. It can also be an illustrated expression of a student's understanding of a concept or event and the inter-relationship of information to that concept or event. Mind maps are similar to concept maps, word webbing, and bubble writing. All of these tend to share similar processes, such as brainstorming, conceptualizing, illustrating, and making connections or relationships.

Aims

Mind maps can be done in groups or by individuals. They are visual organizers that enable students to integrate, sort, and recall information and ideas. They especially appeal to the visual learner. Mind maps are powerful tools for learners. This particular exercise on mind mapping can be used on its own as an introduction to a unit of study on the First World War, or as a model for a Mind Map lesson using different content.

Activities

Procedures:

Begin by showing [Valour Road](#), the first of the Heritage Minutes that depict Canada and Canadians during the First World War (1914-1918). Ask your students to brainstorm with you all that they learned about the First World War from this short, one-minute video. They should come up with a date, names of individual Canadians, description of conditions and some significant facts and opinions. Write their input on the board. Ask them to classify the information they have given you as factual or expressions of opinion. Both can be important and valid.

Now show the second Heritage Minute, [Winnie](#), and go through the same process of brainstorming and writing student responses on the chalkboard or large sheets of paper. Repeat the process for (at least three of) [John McCrae](#), [Nellie McClung](#), the [Halifax Explosion](#), [Vimy Ridge](#), the [Winnipeg Falcons](#), and [Nursing Sisters](#). Each new Minute has a different perspective and more information about the War and its impact on Canadians.

Once you have collected this raw data about the First World War from the Heritage Minutes and the brainstorming exercise, form your students into groups of 3 to 4 and ask each group to produce a mind map illustrating what they have learned about the First World War.

Guidelines

Start with an image at the centre of the paper. If you use an 8 1/2 x 11, sheet turn it sideways. It is easier to spread out the lines that way and to read what you have written. It is a frequent mistake to turn the paper round as you write. Don't do that! It takes a lot of time to read the words when you use the mind map later on.

Print the words - it makes it easier to read! Use mainly lower case but if

you like you can use CAPITALS now and then, for instance to show the important words or the keywords in your map. It is easier to read lower case as the words differ more from one another than capital letters. A printed map gives a more photographic, immediate, and comprehensive image than one done with cursive writing.

One word on each line. If you need more words, draw new lines. Try to limit the number of words you write. You need only a few words if you choose the right ones.

Use colour to highlight, decorate, and differentiate one group of words from another and in illustrations. Colours on your mind map add interest and improve your memory.

Draw pictures. Pictures contain a lot more information than words. Try to use pictures that can gather information from a whole group of words. Put images throughout your mind map, wherever a picture will be more effective than a word.

Use symbols, signs, and arrows to show connections in your mind map or if you want to refer to other material such as quotations, graphs, charts and other reference material you don't want to have in the mind map. Use lines and arrows to show connections and relationships between events, people and ideas.

Make details in your mind map unique. Every mind map is in itself unique, but you can, for instance, make some of the words, pictures and symbols stand out in some respect by drawing them three-dimensional. The reason for this is of course that uniqueness is a way of increasing your memory power.

Most important, use your imagination!

Extension Activity

Now that your students know something about the First World War, ask them an important question: "What don't you know about the war?" For example, we don't know why men enlisted or how women became involved directly in the war effort. This is the beginning of the development of some thoughtful research questions that can be used to further investigate the First World War. In order to encourage your students to go beyond the traditional *Who?*, *What?*, *Where?*, *Why?*, *When?*, and *How?* questions, introduce them to some of the following types of questions:

- **Definitional:** Explains a specific term, concept, or idea; for example, "What is 'no-man's' land?"
- **Decision Making:** An examination of evidence so that a decision or conclusion can be made for action; for example, "The Canadian government is advertising that all healthy, young men enlist in the army. Will you join?"
- **Comparative:** To examine the similarities and/or differences between two or more things such as ideas, people, events; for example, "How do the experiences of women on the homefront compare with the women who went overseas and served in the field during the First World War?"
- **Ranking:** The hierarchical organization of items, ideas and events that share commonalities; for example, "How would you rank the machine gun as an effective weapon in the First World War in comparison with gas, the submarine, the airplane, artillery, the rifle and the tank?"
- **Causal:** To identify relationships among elements, cause and effect, similarities and differences; for example, "How did Canada become involved in the First World War?"

- Speculative: These questions are based on a hypothetical situation; for example, "Would the Allies have won the war if the Americans had not entered the conflict in 1917?" "Would the war have ended earlier if the Allies had mass produced tanks and used them more effectively?"

Challenge your students to express what they don't know about the First World War by formulating a set of research questions. Use these questions to study the war.

Resources

[The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)

[Prezi](#)

[Heritage Minutes](#)

