How to Make a Concept Map

0:00 Owl: Welcome to How to Make a Concept Map, an instructional video on reading comprehension brought to you by the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab.

0:13 A simple way to analyze a text is to break down important information, such as main ideas and key details, with a concept map.

0:22 Creating a concept map for a text is a great way to make the information available in a visual and easy to read manner.

0:29 You can also use this technique to map out ideas for something you want to write.

0:34 Mapping a text is easy.

0:36 Start by writing down the name of the text (or concept) you want to map.

0:41 Then, draw a box for the main idea.

0:45 Next, draw boxes for supporting ideas.

0:48 After that, draw more boxes for supporting details.

0:53 Finally, draw arrows connecting the boxes.

0:58 You can draw your concept map any way you like.

1:01 In this case, we organized our concept map vertically with the main idea on top and supporting details at the bottom.

1:09 However, you can draw your concept map horizontally, or even place your main idea in the center and surround it with boxes for supporting ideas and details.

1:19 Make your concept map as large as you need it to be in order to map out the text you’re reading.

1:25 In this example, we’ll map out a chapter on muscle tissue.

1:30 First, write out the title and summarize the main idea.

Displayed on screen Chapter 10: Muscle Tissue
Examines the structure and function of the three types of muscle tissue in the human body: skeletal, cardiac, and smooth muscle

1:35 Then, summarize the supporting ideas.

Displayed on screen Skeletal Muscle: Voluntary muscles found throughout the body and used to cause movement
Cardiac Muscle: Involuntary muscles in the heart that pump blood into the circulatory system
Smooth Muscle: Involuntary muscles in the digestive, respiratory, reproductive tracts and iris that control organ functions

1:38 If the text has sub-headings or sections, refer to them to identify the supporting ideas.

1:44 If not, look for supporting ideas by identifying the main idea of each body paragraph.

1:51 Finally, pull out and list key supporting details.
Skeletal Muscle: Comprised of three layers of connective tissue called “mysia”; Muscle fibers are long, cylindrical, striated, and banded; Examples include biceps, triceps, deltoids, and trapezius

Cardiac Muscle: Muscle fibers resemble skeletal muscle, but are shorter and contain only one nucleus; Muscle fibers are branched and connected at each end by intercalated discs; Involuntary muscle with contractions controlled by pacemaker cells

Smooth Muscle: Muscle fibers are spindle-shaped with a single nucleus; Contractions cause the ends to pull toward the center in a corkscrew; Involuntary muscle with contractions controlled by hormones, neural stimulation, & stretching

1:55  This might consist of key facts, names, dates, concepts, arguments, or examples.
2:03  When you’re done, you’ll have a complete map of a text’s argument.
2:07  That’ll come in handy the next time you need to write or talk about it!
2:12  You can download a Concept Map template here.
2:19  Thanks for listening to this instructional video on How to Make a Concept Map!
2:24  Visit the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for more support with reading and writing skills.

The completed example in the video is shown below.

The contents of this web page were developed under grant #P116F150077 from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.