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.

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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.

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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.

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**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.