

**APPLY STRATEGIES TO THINK
CREATIVELY AND CRITICALLY**

INTRODUCTORY / EASY

BRAINSTORM AND MIND MAP



SKILL ADDRESSED:

Apply strategies to think creatively and critically

LEVEL OF CHALLENGE:

Introductory / Easy

TITLE OF ACTIVITY:

Brainstorm and Mind Map



INTRODUCTION TO THE SKILL

Creative thinking allows us to generate new ideas, combinations and strategies, that may have a positive impact on our life, our environment or others around us. Maybe you need to come up with a solution to a problem or with an innovative approach to draw in customers – sometimes we need to help our mind to focus and sprout some ideas. Through critical, creative and lateral thinking strategies, you can set yourself up for success and step-by-step get closer to where you want to be. It is always good to first assess the starting point by critically reflecting on the facts in front of you. Then, start collecting all your ideas and associations – at first without any judgement, so anything is allowed! Dare to think laterally and come up with something that is not in plain sight. Finally, you evaluate your collected ideas and choose the most appropriate one!

THE CHALLENGE

In this challenge, you will learn to apply two widely-known techniques to let your creative juices flow: Brainstorming and Mind Mapping.

We suggest to start with an open brainstorming and then in a second step, organise your thoughts and ideas in a mind map. You can choose any topic you want that is relevant to you at the moment or you try it first with our proposed example topic – it's your choice!

Grab a pen and a piece of paper and you are ready to start. If you prefer, you can also use digital tools, but if this is your first time using these techniques, we suggest trying it first without additional aids that may add a layer of confusion.

STRUCTURE

Let's start with the brainstorming!

STEP 1: Write the main topic in the middle of your piece of paper. Either choose your own or try it with our example: "Wishlist to my future self"

STEP 2: Start writing down everything that comes to your mind that is associated with the main topic. Do not judge the ideas – some will be obvious and basic, some super fitting, some strange and uncertain, and

some maybe even impossible. It does not matter, everything is allowed. If you like, you can set yourself a time-limit of for example 5 or 10 minutes.

STEP 3: Now, let's organise your thoughts! Try to sort the ideas and see, if some are connected. You could try to find overarching categories – for example: professional goals, financial/materialistic goals, social goals, experience you would like to make, things to avoid. Highlight them in different colours.

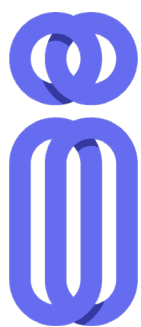
STEP 4: To really make sense of your ideas, now put them in a mind map. Take a second sheet of paper and again start by writing the main topic in the middle. Then, write the overarching categories around the main one and draw branches from the middle to the topics. Then, cluster the ideas that belong to the topics around them on your mind map. Now, you can neatly see how each idea is connected to the main topic!



DEMONSTRATION AND EVALUATION

Congratulations! Brainstorming and Mind Mapping are great ways of coming up with ideas. You can use these techniques alone or in a group. If you are using a digital tool or sticky notes, you can sort and cluster the ideas seamlessly from brainstorming to mind map. As you become more confident in using these methods, you can start even directly with a mind map and define some sup-topics or categories right from the beginning.

A mind map is usually done at the start of a creative process and with it, you can decide on the next steps of action. Your next step now could be to assess what you have learned in this infographic! Try our final quiz and test what you know about critical, creative and lateral thinking!



INTERFACE



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