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Introduction



We all use graphic organisers of some kind, and to some degree, every day of our lives. A menu, a train schedule, a calendar and even a guide to television programs are all examples of graphic organisers. They are beneficial in making it possible for us to visualise information in a condensed and organised form. They also make it possible for us to organise plans, thoughts and ideas. They help writers to organise thoughts before writing. They are the tools that help us to learn, process information, envision and create.

If students become familiar with graphic organisers at an early age, they are more likely to have an understanding of how to organise ideas and concepts, how to think more clearly, how to plan with a goal in mind and how to relate concepts, ideas and facts to other concepts, ideas and facts. Learners, of all kinds, are better able to visualise information and ideas when familiar with graphic organisers. They are better able to access information, understand information and organise and present information.

There are a variety of graphic organisers included in this book, and a variety of ways to use them. The organisers are arranged according to their types and similarities, but many graphic organisers may be used for multi-purposes. Any graphic organiser may be modified (expanded, simplified or combined) to suit student capabilities, the intended purposes of the organiser or an entirely new use. The organisers may be reproduced, copied after being modified, used individually, in groups or enlarged for whole class use.

Each section begins with an introduction offering suggestions for the uses of its graphic organisers. In addition, the simpler organisers are nearer the beginning of each section progressing to the more complex toward the end. Nevertheless, the graphic organisers in this book can be modified so that they are suitable to younger and older students. Some suggestions for ways to do this are found in the introductions.

Some organisers come with filled-in examples, but that does not mean that the organiser can only be used in that manner and with that kind of subject matter. Some organisers come with very little direction, in part because they may be such common organisers that their usage is well known and they are included so that they may be readily accessible, and in part because some organisers are open-ended enough that your own interpretation, and the interpretations of the students, is encouraged.

Creativity is also encouraged. With familiarity with the organisers in this book, it is hoped that students and teachers will feel competent in creating new, useful and specific organisers for their own needs. Learning is often fluid and organic, and so, organisers to facilitate such processes ought to also be organic and fluid. Graphic organisers can be created on the fly, as it were, while in process and in need of a way to structure what is being created, imagined or analysed.

Some kinds of organisers appear more than once in the book, with different purposes in mind. Even then, the uses of graphic organisers are not limited to only those purposes, and perhaps could be placed in every section of the book with some modification.

This book offers only a few of the many graphic organisers available. In addition, there are those that you are inspired to create after having experience with these. Each graphic organiser can be modified, combined or revised to fit the needs of students and the lessons being prepared. While there is some overlap between the books, for graphic organisers more suitable for older students, see *Graphic Organisers Grades 4–8*, TCM 3208.



Web spinning



This section begins with *Brainstorming rules* (page 6). Two lists are included. One is a simplified version for students to refer to as a reminder. They may each have a copy at their desks, or put the rules on a poster near the chalkboard or whiteboard. The value in brainstorming is to allow the ideas to flow without judgment. One idea will lead to another and one student's train of thought will inspire another's. Brainstorm for topics, ideas and inspiration.

An organiser for using the results of a brainstorming session follows, *Brainstorming organiser I* (page 7). It is not, however, the only way or the best way to record brainstorming results. Perhaps a brainstorming session to create a brainstorming results organiser is in order! *Brainstorming organiser II* (page 8) could be used after a session, when the best ideas are chosen, or during the session, as a means of recording the ideas as they come. It is important to record every idea that is presented during brainstorming.

The webs that follow, in this section, can be used in many ways to introduce students to the concept of creating webs. *Organising the results* (page 9), is a chart that includes four columns for sorting the results of a brainstorming session. The chart can be adapted for fewer or more columns, as needed. Again, this graphic organiser is best used during or immediately following a brainstorming session. One idea would be to have the teacher, or a student, writing the ideas as they come, on the board, while another records them on a graphic organiser. An alternative would be to have all students recording on a graphic organiser during the session. But only the latter is not recommended for beginning brainstormers. They need to be able to focus on what is happening during the session. A simple, generic web for brainstorming is included on page 10, *Brainstorming web*.

Word web (page 11) is a simple and useful way to introduce young students to webs, in general, as they improve their vocabularies. Students may also use the web for defining science or social studies words. The *Senses web*, on page 12, offers additional web practice for students, and can be used in a variety of ways, such as creative writing, reporting on excursions, science, etc. Try introducing students to the *Senses web* by having them record what they sense in the immediate moment, in the classroom.

The *5 Ws and 1 H web* (page 13) is useful in many areas of the curriculum, reinforcing both the Ws and Hs and organisational thinking skills. Familiarity with the graphic organiser will cause the students to think of the Ws and Hs any time they write, inquire or research.

The Web spinning section ends with *Freeform clustering* (page 16), a method for recording and generating ideas. Clustering is most effective in creative writing, but it can also generate ideas for reports, projects and any subjects that need fresh ideas. (See example on pages 14 and 15). A student who has had practice with freeform clustering will be more capable of generating ideas and structure when asked to write.



Brainstorming rules

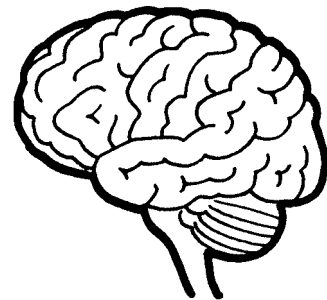


How to brainstorm

1. Write down every thought and idea. Every thought and idea has value.
2. Record thoughts and ideas very quickly. Keep things moving with a rapid flow of ideas.
3. Do not interrupt the flow to judge any thoughts or ideas. Record all thoughts even if they seem off topic, unrelated or even dumb.
4. Remember that ideas that do not seem worth recording might prove to be important after all. At the very least, they may lead to other valuable ideas.
5. Brainstorming can be done alone, but the more people involved in the process, the more ideas will be generated.
6. Keep brainstorming until the ideas slow down. Take a deep breath, pause and be ready to record some more ideas. They will still trickle in for a while.
7. When the ideas finally seem to slow to a stop, look over what was generated.
8. Choose the best ideas to use.

The rules of brainstorming

- ✍ Write down everything.
- ✍ Write fast.
- ✍ Don't stop for any reason.
- ✍ All ideas are valuable.
- ✍ Brainstorm alone, but even better, with others.
- ✍ Keep brainstorming. Pause but don't quit yet.
- ✍ When finished, look at what is written.
- ✍ Choose the best ideas.





Brainstorming organiser I



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