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How to Outline your Book and Chapters with Mindmapping

By Judy Cullins

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Mindmapping is better than linear outlining because authors can use flexible thinking and relativity in writing their book. One can add and subtract a thought or phrase from a mindmap easily. Mindmapping is an excellent way to start, organize, and finish your book.

What is Mindmapping?

Mindmapping is a color-coded outline of main ideas, sub topics and details, printed on different colored branches connected to the center. In the center in a circle, you will list your main idea, such as your book or chapter title.

For "The One-Minute Sales Person", Spencer's mindmap would have had seven different colored vertical branches coming from that center, so details can be put on connected horizontal branches. (much easier to read)

What are the advantages of Mindmapping?

First, a mindmap is open-ended and open-minded. No more squeezing new "ahas" or ideas into the strict, tight form of the linear outline. You can make mistakes in your mindmaps. Imperfection leads to creativity. When you get an idea for chapter one, you can just add another branch off the main one. Mindmapping expands flexible thinking, making for better writing.

Second, mindmaps use only three to five concrete or color words on a branch. These key words help jog our memory. Under Chapter One "Attracting Passion," I added several horizontal lines that represented the format that follows. One line had "opening quote," the next one "introduction," the next one "Jerry's Story," the next "Food for Thought and Action," the next, "Passion Hot Line," the last line, "practice."

Third, mindmaps speed up your writing because you only write key phrases. When you sit down at the computer, from your color-coded map, the answers will flow naturally. If you need to

fatten up your chapter, just go to your chapter file folders where you keep your research.

Fourth, in mindmaps you see the whole related to the parts. Your thesis, chapter titles, and chapter contents all flow because you answered each question your readers had. This fast-forward technique allows me to write at least two or three books each year, and makes each book more organized, more focused and clear, easier to read, and finally brings more sales because people can understand the information quickly and easily.

For a picture of a mindmap of "Your Book's Format" go to www.bookcoaching.com/mindmap

How Do I Create My Mindmap?

Use a large sheet of paper, at least 8 ½ by 11 inches, but I recommend a large square of butcher paper or poster board, so you can spread out and enjoy the process! Have at least six or seven colored felt-tip pens in primary and bright colors ready.

In the center, encircle your title. Arrange your chapter headings, each on a different colored vertical branch, around the center in any order (you can number them later) If you can't think of a title, put a few key words. Use only one color per branch. Off each main branch, put five or so other horizontal branches of particular chapter parts.

Even though you later change your mind about the contents, this initial mindmap gives you the overall picture of what your book is and what it will share with its readers. I made several mindmaps of my Passion book before I settled on the best information to include.

Practice: Create your book's mindmap on a separate piece of paper

Practice: Create one chapter's mindmap on a separate piece of paper now.

Wow! You are up to speed. You have your thesis--what challenge your book will solve, your chapter working titles, your rough draft evolving with a Table of Contents, and you have questions to answer in each chapter.

Mindmapping is an excellent way to start, organize, and finish your book.

Judy Cullins: 20-year author, publisher, book coach
Helps entrepreneurs manifest their book and web dream
eBook: "Ten Non-techie Ways to Market Online"
<http://www.bookcoaching.com/products.shtml>
Send an email to Subscribe@bookcoaching.com
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Plain speaking -- 4 secrets for getting your book purchased

By Terry Freedman

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What can be more infuriating to a potential purchaser of a non-fiction book than chapter headings which give no clue as to their contents? After all, if someone is looking in the non-fiction section of a book store, it implies they want facts, not a fancy and "clever" table of contents! Here are 4 sure-fire ways to make your text grab the reader's attention:

1. Make sure the text on the front and back covers is compelling. It should state plainly and simply what the book is about. For example: "Buy this book, and learn how to master the craft of teaching in 15 lessons".
2. Why should anyone buy the book from YOU? Don't waste limited space on the back cover telling the potential reader about your 3 cats - unless it's a book about cats, of course! Write something like: "The author has been a practising teacher for 13 years, and writes regularly for the Teaching Times."
3. Organise the table of contents so that the chapters fall into easily-identifiable sections. For example: "Section 1: Before you face your first class; Section 2: The first year" and so on
4. Make sure that the chapter headings actually MEAN something. You may think it's great to have chapters like "All that glitters" and "Every cloud has a silver lining", but I have news for you: nobody

else is impressed! When people are browsing they want to know right away what they will get for their money if they buy the book. They don't have time to look at each chapter to find out what it's about. The chapter headings should tell them everything they need to know. For example, have chapters like: "Chapter 3: Maintaining order in your classroom; Chapter 4: Where to find excellent resources for your lessons", and so on.

You have just a few seconds to impress a potential buyer. Don't waste them!

Terry Freedman has nearly 20 years' experience as a writer. A member of the United Kingdom's Society of Authors, Terry has had around a dozen books published, and over 800 specialist articles in leading newspapers and magazines. His website, <http://www.terry-freedman.org.uk>, provides free access to many of his articles, a free newsletter and more, or visit his blog at <http://www.terryfreedman.biz> for more quirky bits and pieces.



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