

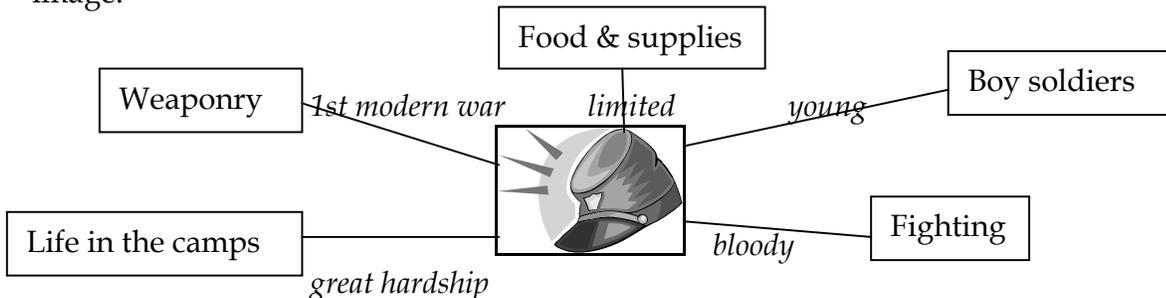
Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is a method of creating a visual image that communicates a big idea, supporting ideas, and relationships among ideas. Researchers use mind maps to brainstorm a picture of their inquiry topic, to figure out the aspects of the topic that are most interesting or open to inquiry, and to think through definitions, examples, causes, effects, and questions.

What does a mind map look like?

A mind map has an image of the main idea in the center, with 5-10 ideas that relate to the main idea revolving around the center, but connected by lines labeled with words that express the relationship between the two ideas.

For example, a mind map of the “Life of a Soldier in the American Civil War” might have an image of a soldier’s cap in the center, with ideas like “boy soldiers,” “food and supplies,” “weaponry,” “life in the camps,” and “fighting” surrounding the center image.



Process for Creating a Mind Map

1. In the center of your paper or screen, draw a symbol or image that represents the main idea.
2. Draw branches from the main idea to 5-10 subtopics that you have gathered from prior knowledge or background information. The subtopics can be expressed as words or images.
3. Label the branch lines with descriptive words or verbs to express the relationship between the ideas.
4. You may decide to extend the mind map by brainstorming smaller topics that relate to each subtopic.
5. You can use color, different types of print or graphics, and variations in size to ensure that your main ideas and relationships are clear.
6. Be creative! This is a chance to clarify an overall picture of your inquiry topic and figure out what **you** want to research in more detail.

Try these sites for free mind mapping tools:

- <http://mywebspiration.com/>
- <http://www.mindmeister.com/>
- <http://www.mindomo.com/>