

Using Inspiration



Introduction

Inspiration is a piece of software that can help you and your students brainstorm ideas and create concept maps.

Topics to Be Covered

1. Terminology: idea maps, concept maps, webs
2. Creating idea maps, concept maps, webs
3. Using on-screen elements (pictures, etc.)
4. Other Aspects of Inspiration
5. Classroom Uses

1. Idea Maps, Concept Maps and Webs

Idea Map: If you are creating an idea map, you start with the main idea in the middle. Then, you add other ideas and concepts to the main idea. Finally, more specific details are added. When you are finished, you can look at the entire map and discern patterns and themes.

You might use idea maps for brainstorming (either individually or in a group), problem solving or report writing.

Concept Map: If you are creating a concept map, you create a diagram that starts with a general concept and widens to specific details. An example would be starting with a subject, such as “Reading,” and moving to specific skills that a student would need to begin reading. The most important concepts are connected arrows that have descriptors on them to explain the relationship between the concepts.

You might use concept maps to illustrate scientific concepts or for other types of knowledge mapping.

Web: If you create a web, you have a visual map that shows how different pieces of information fit together. You start with the main idea in the middle, with different categories of information connected to it. Then, you add ideas, facts and information in various categories that fit together.

Webbing is very useful when you’re analyzing a story or brainstorming ideas for a plan or written report.

2. Creating Idea Maps, Concept Maps and Webs

Here are the basics for getting started. We can the order of the subtopics and where they are placed on the screen to create different types of diagrams.

- ◇ When you start Inspiration, the main idea bubble appears in the center of your screen. (You can move it to the side, if you are making a concept map.) You should type in your main idea (for example, "My Life"). Now you are ready to start mapping out your ideas.



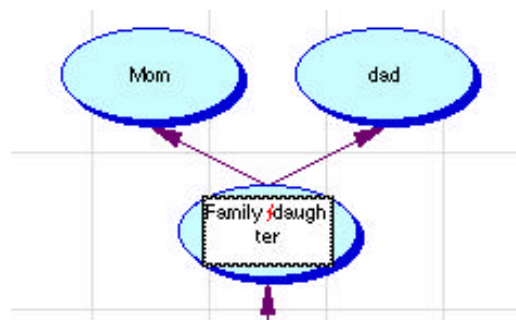
- ◇ Next you will have to create idea bubbles that will link to your main idea, in this case, "My Life". Single-click on the "My Life" bubble to highlight it. When adding an idea bubble to your main idea, click on either the *Horizontal and Vertical Create* button at the top of the tool bar:



- ◇ (note: If you want you idea bubble to be below your main idea, click on the arrow that is pointing down)
- ◇ Rename each bubble (for example, childhood, education, family, friends, etc.).



- ◇ Next you will use one of the features of Inspiration, *RapidFire*. Click on the RapidFire button on the tool bar. You will see an "f" next to the idea that you have put in your bubble. In RapidFire your ideas will be placed in freeform structure, flowing to whatever open spaces are available.



3. Using On screen Elements

Inspiration has a symbol palette along the left side, which has pictures or symbols that you can use. Simply highlight a bubble by single-clicking on it, and then click on the picture in the palette that you would like instead. Also, if you click on the right or left arrows on the top of the symbol palette, you will see lots of other pictures.



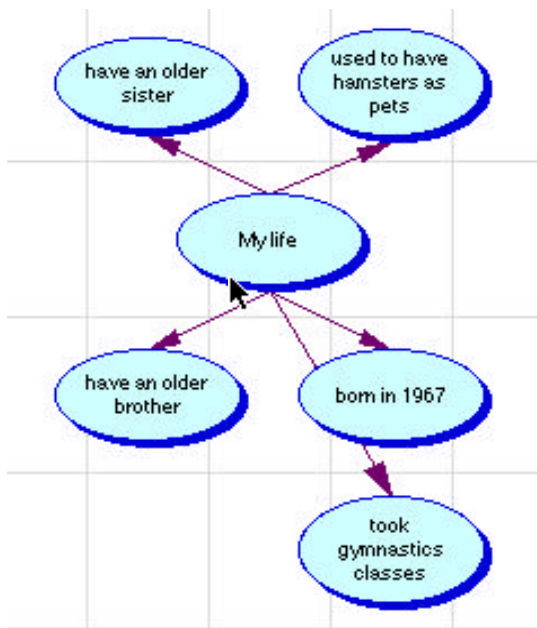
You can also copy a picture from the Internet and paste it into Inspiration. Simply find a picture on the Internet you like and click and hold with the mouse button (if you are on a Mac). You will get a menu that pops up--highlight "Copy Image." Then, go back to Inspiration and paste your picture. If you are on a PC, find a picture on the Internet that you like, and click with your right mouse button. You will get a menu that pops up--highlight "Copy Image." Then, go back to Inspiration and paste your picture.

4. Other Aspects of Inspiration

Inspiration has two modes that you can use to enter and organize data. The first one that we have used is the Diagram Mode, which is where the program automatically starts. You get a visual representation of your web.



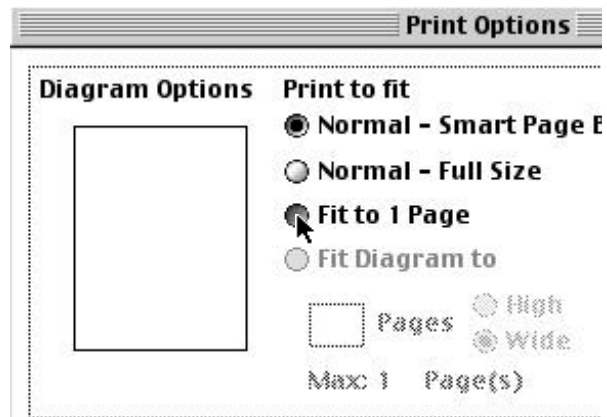
The other mode is the Outline Mode. If you created a web in the Diagram Mode and wanted to change it, all you have to do is click the Outline button in the tool bar. This will automatically put your work into Outline form. So, your work would go from this:



to this:

- + **My life**
- I. - born in 1967**
- II. - have an older brother**
- III. - have an older sister**
- IV. - used to have hamsters as pe**
- V. - took gymnastics classes**

When you get ready to print something you've done in Inspiration, you might want it to fit on one page. Otherwise, it might be difficult to piece it all together. If you want it to fit on one page, go to File . . . Print Options. In the dialogue box that appears, click on the circle in front of "Fit to 1 Page." Then, you can preview or print your document.



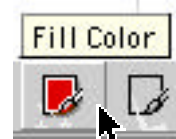
To change what the words look like, go to the Format menu. Then, you can change the font, size, or style of your text.



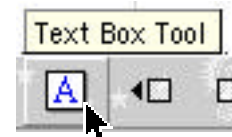
To change the color of your text, click on the A with the paintbrush on the bottom tool bar. That controls the text color. You can choose another color from the pop-up palette.



To change the color of the bubbles in the Diagram mode, click on the red square on the bottom tool bar. That controls the fill color. You can choose another color from the pop-up palette.



You might want to have your students add a text box to their brainstorm or web, so that they can write a title or their names. To add a text box, click on the A in the square on the bottom tool bar. Then draw your text box on the screen and you can begin to type.



4. Classroom Uses

Here are a few ideas:

- brainstorming paragraphs and essays
- creating cause and effect charts
- allowing students to illustrate what they know about a given concept

Inspiration comes with a set of templates for teachers to use. Don't be constrained by these examples--be "Inspired" and find new uses for the program!