

# how to use CONCEPT MAPS

... just in case outlines aren't your thing.

**START WITH A QUESTION** Start with a general topic, a specific question, or a "theme." These can be simple or complex, depending on the depth of the material. *Try this with your History essay questions or English prompts – they serve as excellent starting points.*

**KEY CONCEPTS** What's the big idea? How can it answer your question? Think: **compare and contrast or similarities and differences.** Then add your secondary or tertiary concepts to complete brainstorming.

**MAKE A LIST** Create a hierarchy to help organize concepts in order: general to specific (or vice versa).

These phrases and terms should demonstrate the hierarchical structure needed to answer your question. "**Linking words**" are the words you use to describe the transitions between a larger concept and a more specific concept. Strengthen your completed concept map with a summary reflection identifying the different relationships you observed. This will help you study for the test at a later date.

**ESSAY CONNECTION** Use "**linking words**" in a concept map for your History or English classes to answer the "5 W's" (who, what, when, where, and why) of your topic. Visually "**outline**" your essay using flashcards or cutouts of each paragraph of your essay.

**BUILD YOUR CONCEPT MAP** Get creative! Use your iPad, a whiteboard, scratch paper, and so on. Do what works best for you. **Think BIG!**

**FLASHCARDS** Use flashcards to represent each of your concepts. This way you can quiz yourself while drawing connections between concepts. Practice by writing the concept or key term on one side and the description or definition on the other.

**POST-ITS** If you want to use a whiteboard, go for it! Use post-its to create your concept map.

