Step 1: Get a blank sheet of paper. On the center of the paper, write a word or phrase that best represents your main subject or topic. Draw a circle around it.

Step 2: Around your first circle, write words that you associate with your main subject or topic. Write whatever comes to mind. For an example, in the middle of a blank sheet of paper, you might write the words How to Learn English. You’d then write whatever comes to mind that you associate with learning English—like practice English, do homework, go to school, use entertainment media and so on. You can also ask questions—like What must I do to learn English? These are your sub-topics.

Step 3: Circle your sub-topics and draw lines from the main subject to your sub-topics.

Step 4: Around each sub-topic, write words that you associate it. For an example, around the sub-topic practice English, write whatever comes to mind that you associate with practicing English—like with my family, with my partners in class, everywhere I go, and so on.

Step 5. Circle those new words and connect them with the sub-topic. Branch out as much and as far as you can. Resist censoring yourself. Remember this is free association—there are no wrong answers. Some of the words your mind wanders to may surprise you, but that's fine—keep writing. If you find yourself starting to force words, you can stop.