

Aubie Asks

Aubie asks at the libraries

This video will cover how to focus your paper topic using mind mapping. What is a mind map? A mind map may not be the type of map you're thinking of. A mind map helps you organize what you know about your topic, it allows you to brainstorm ideas and focus your topic. A mind map is a visual representation of your topic. It can be as elaborate as you want, with color and pictures, or it can be more simple, like the next example. Let's say I'm interested in global warming, a good start but too broad for a paper. In the center of the white board, or, in your case, a piece of paper, I write my topic as I currently understand it. I try to condense it to maybe one word or a short phrase. Then I draw branches for my main topic. On those branches, I write down aspects of the topic that interest me. For instance, these could be issues, ideas, or facts related to my topic. Next, I consider each aspect and brainstorm for examples or ideas related to each. For instance, I'm interested in things I can do at home to reduce global warming. This may be using energy efficient appliances or even foam insulation. I write these examples on smaller branches that are connected to the main branch. Keep in mind as you construct your map that you're looking for relationships between ideas. Continue on this way as you construct a diagram or map of your topic. Let's review how to make a mind map. First, write your topic in the center of a piece of paper. Circle it. Draw branches from the central circle. On those branches write issues, ideas, or facts you know about your topic. Next, add smaller branches to show additional issues, ideas, or examples that relate to the larger branches. Continue on in this way to construct a diagram or "map" of your topic. Good luck! Remember our e-mail address, AskALibrarian@auburn.edu.