



WHY WOULD YOU USE SKETCHNOTING?

Sketchnoting is a way of taking notes and organising ideas. It's super-powerful for memory and critical thinking because it relies on images as well as words. It's a great tool for thinking through problems, taking notes, and organising ideas. Sketchnoting can rev up your listening skills, too.

WHAT?

Sketchnoting is the practice of using images and symbols as well as words to document, record and/or organise concepts, information and ideas. It is sometimes called Visual Notetaking.

IT'S OKAY TO...

- not know what you want to do
- get knocked into the pit
- move faster or go slower
- fail (as long as you tried)

WHAT YOU NEED

- Analogue tools: a sketch pad or blank notebook, a favourite pencil or pen, coloured pens or markers. Start simple!
- Digital tools: a tablet or iPad with an app such as Adobe Photoshop Sketch, Tayasui Sketches, Inkflow or online free services such as Paper by WeTransfer.

WHAT TO DO

- 01 Check out the basics.** Sketchnoting is NOT just for people who can draw fancy things. Can you draw a box? Or something close enough to pass as a box? That's fine, you can sketchnote. Sketchnoting is relevant to whatever your level of artistic ability.
 - Check out the basics of sketchnoting with Sketchnote Academy's handy introduction: <https://sketchnoteacademy.com/what-is-sketchnoting/>
- 02 Apply it to your classes.** Sketchnoting is a way to open up the way your brain works, by combining words and visuals when you take notes. If you struggle with an urge to write down everything the teacher says, try sketchnoting – it can help you listen critically in classes for the genuinely important information, not a long mash of everything. This can mean your notes make more sense to you when you revise.
 - Find out more by exploring visual note taking in school with this Verbal to Visual video (duration 5:06): www.verbaltovisual.com/what-is-sketchnoting/
- 03 Learn the power of really listening.** If you think of sketchnoting only as drawing or doodling, you're missing more than half the point. By drawing lines and shapes you open up your mind to the free-spinning state that allows really big ideas to slip in. It's not dreaming, it's listening but also

WHAT TO DO CONT:

taking in what's going on. Try these tips to improve your listening skills as you sketchnote:

- Verbal to Visual – How to improve your listening skills (duration 10:19):
<https://youtu.be/mvgz2ih11rQ>

04

Try it out. Listen to a short section of a podcast, something wide-ranging and ideas-filled like 99% Invisible (<https://99percentinvisible.org/>) or Strong Songs (<https://strongsongspodcast.com/>). Sit down, with your tools ready (analogue or digital), and headphones on. Listen. Let your mind and your hand wander and start creating lines, jotting down words, writing things that the podcast makes you think. Circle or box the important ones. Connect some. Star some. Keep it up for at least 10 minutes, and don't worry if it starts slowly. You can even rewind – that's the beauty of practising with a podcast! If you want to add buildings, cities, people (99% Invisible) or musicians, song lyrics and musical notes (Strong Songs), go for it! It's yours. This will let you see what works for you.

05

Rough is good. Remember that sketchnoting is only for you, this is not a performance or an exhibition piece, so it can be as rough or as detailed as works for you.

06

Think organisation. Most people start out sketchnoting in a loose Z structure (like the way we read), but there's no rule that says this has to happen. Try new layouts to see if they work for you. For example, if the speaker says they're going to cover four aspects of something, quick! Divide your paper into four. With a X or an +, it's your call. Try clamshells, bubbles, interlocking keys, mind maps, and grids. It's your own personal note-taking of the IDEAS that were shared in any way that makes them real and memorable to you. Here is a handy guide to some of the many ways you could lay out your sketchnotes:

- Sketchnote Layouts – The ultimate guide:
<https://sketchnoteclassroom.com/blog/216928/sketchnote-layouts>

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GOT IT?

- You've given sketchnoting a try and are experimenting with tools and structures that work for you.



TRY THIS

If you feel like you've nailed it but you want to level up, try this:

- Define your own icons and symbols, such as a cloud around something that makes you think, or a box around a key piece of information you want to revise (e.g. for exams later).
- Start using colour – does a particular colour mean something?
- Watch some of the videos in the sketchnoting courses online.

SO WHAT?

- Sketchnoting helps you mentally organise information and concepts, and retain them.
- Learning to sketchnote will improve your listening skills, which can give you a huge advantage in work and life.

WHAT ACTION WILL YOU TAKE?

- Gather your tools and start making marks
- Check out one or more of the videos, and make some decisions about symbols and layouts that work for you



IF YOU LIKED THIS ONE YOU MIGHT WANT TO TRY...

- > How to Write a Project Proposal
- > How to Make a Disco Ball
- > How to Present Your Ideas
- > How to Revise for Exams