

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and additional advice for GCA Assignment 2 – Reflective Mind Map

11 May 2021

How should I go about designing my mind map?

While every student has their own individual way of doing things, I would recommend splitting your work into three steps:

- Going through the 12 weeks of material and identifying those items, ideas, multimedia etc that you find interesting, important and relevant to the four questions of the assignment brief and maybe putting those into a separate document or folder, clearly labelling which week each item comes from
- Designing the skeleton or basic structure (i.e. organising principles, themes, branches etc) of your mind map on a piece of paper, whiteboard or even blank Powerpoint slide, making sure that you establish a good narrative structure that allows space for the things you want to include and that addresses the key questions of the assignment, *before* you actually import any multimedia
- Then populating that structure with the items you want to include.

How many components do I need from each week?

As long as you include at least one item from each week, there is no other indicative or maximum number. From some weeks you may refer to lots of different items, whereas from other weeks you may literally just use one or two things. I stress the word 'item', because some students initially thought that you have to cover the whole week's topic. That wouldn't be possible anyway – or it would lead to a very vague/generic assignment – as we covered many topics and in some weeks we covered multiple topics.

How do I know if I have enough, too much, or too little material?

If you zoom to 100%, then the text should be easily readable (neither too big, nor too small) – e.g. any font size between 12-16 should be fine. If you find that your items/fonts are too big at 100% and you have lots of empty space, then you probably need to add materials. If you find that at 100% you have to reduce your font to below 12, and/or that the slide is full of materials, arrows etc, then you need to simplify it a bit.

It's important to remember: that while after having worked on this assignment for several weeks/months, the reasons for including stuff and the linkages between them might be clear to you, they won't be clear to the reader. Don't make any assumptions – other than that the reader/examiners won't be inside your mind, so you will have to be very explicit about why things are there, how they relate to each other and how they answer the questions in the brief.

How should I structure my material?

The overall structure of your mind map is perhaps the most important thing – it immediately provides the reader with an indication of how they should read it. You may use one central hub (e.g. word, phrase, challenge, question etc – what you might call a 1st order item) from which you then branch out to 2nd order items (e.g. 6 clouds) and then 3rd and even 4th order items. Or you might split your mind map into multiple (2, 4 or even 6) areas/hubs and branch items out of each of those hubs, and so on. You may structure your mind map around various global challenges, or the twin themes of global security and sustainability, or any one or more of the four questions of the brief, or weeks of teaching, or SDGs, or whichever organising principle works for you, as long as you adequately cover all four questions laid out in the brief and demo video.

Make sure to use titles and headings from your different hubs, groups, themes, topics etc. Using a larger font for those 1st/2nd order topic headings may be a good idea. Colour-coding sections or different types of material is also a great way to make the mind map more reader-friendly, because it helps clarify how things group together.

Linkages between topics, materials, weeks etc is key and one of the important objectives of this assignment. Again, you don't want to end up with a mind map that looks like a bowl of spaghetti, so using your judgment to have enough links but not too many is important.

How much text can/should I include?

There is a lot of flexibility in this assignment and you can decide what amount of text is appropriate for your mind map. Do bear in mind that this is primarily a visual assignment, not a textual one, so we would not expect to see large blocks or long paragraphs of text. Having said that, there are several ways in which you can incorporate bits of text around the mindmap:

- Including titles/headings for groups (or 'hubs') of items, so as to help the reader navigate your mind map
- Adding a short note in the caption underneath the item, to explain why you chose it, what its relevance or importance is, and perhaps how it links to the broader grouping/theme
- Adding bits of text on the connector, arrows or links between items to explain how they interlink
- Adding short free-flowing text boxes around the mind map as needed.

Again, it's all about finding a balance and not making your mind map look text-heavy or cluttered. There should be enough blank space between items to make it easy to read and to immediately understand the overall structure.

It's also important to remember: that this is a **reflective** mind map. Therefore, the goal is not merely to convey facts and figures, but to express your own voice. Why did you find these specific items of interest and importance? What are the GCAs and issues you're passionate about and why? What did you learn during this unit? Again, these things have to come out explicitly through the visuals, the signposting and the text.

What do you mean by global change makers?

Do make sure that you adequately address this question. 'Change makers' refers specifically to individuals, not only organisations or groups, and ideally should refer to the present time. That is to say: who are the people driving global change today? They may be politicians, entrepreneurs, activists, celebrities, diplomats, researchers, journalists, heroes, villains, etc. "Change" doesn't just mean positive change (and of course it doesn't just mean negative change either). Any kind of change, at any level that may have global implications is acceptable. Think broadly and outside the box.

How should we reference materials?

On the mind map itself, you only have to cite the week from which you took the respective material in the caption underneath that item, as shown in the examples of the demo video. You may, of course, choose to also include a brief explanation of what that material shows.

So, for example, if you use a screenshot from a documentary included in Week 3's content, you can say "Week 3, Title of the Documentary".

On a separate slide or document, you should include a full list of references using the BU Harvard Guide available here: <https://libguides.bournemouth.ac.uk/study-skills-referencing-plagiarism>

It may be a good idea to split your list of references into different types of materials e.g.

- Videos
- Documents
- Lecture slides/recordings
- Etc

And then give the references in alphabetical order underneath each section.

For the items that are taken from recorded lectures/Zoom sessions, you can just include the Week number, the date, the title of that week's topic, and the timestamp of the video.