



Graphic Organizers to Support Literacy

What to do: Consider the purpose of your activity and what your targeted outcome should be. Review the graphic organizers to see if one of them may be useful for the lesson, then follow the instructions provided for that tool.

Why it matters: Research shows that graphic organizers can help students learn, process, and remember information. These tools are especially useful for students who find it hard to listen or to focus their attention.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers structure information visually and may include text, images, diagrams, and other elements to show key concepts, relationships, or processes. Some common examples are Venn diagrams, concept maps, and timelines. Graphic organizers can be used:

- **Before an activity:** To preview learning and help students map relevant knowledge and skills they already have.
- **During an activity:** To present key concepts and aid learning and retention.
- **After an activity:** To summarize and review key concepts and as a springboard to extend learning.

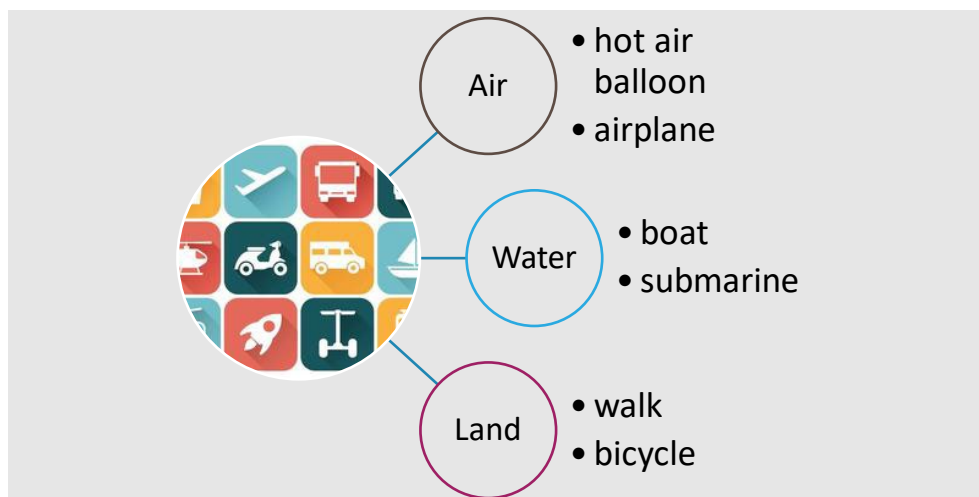
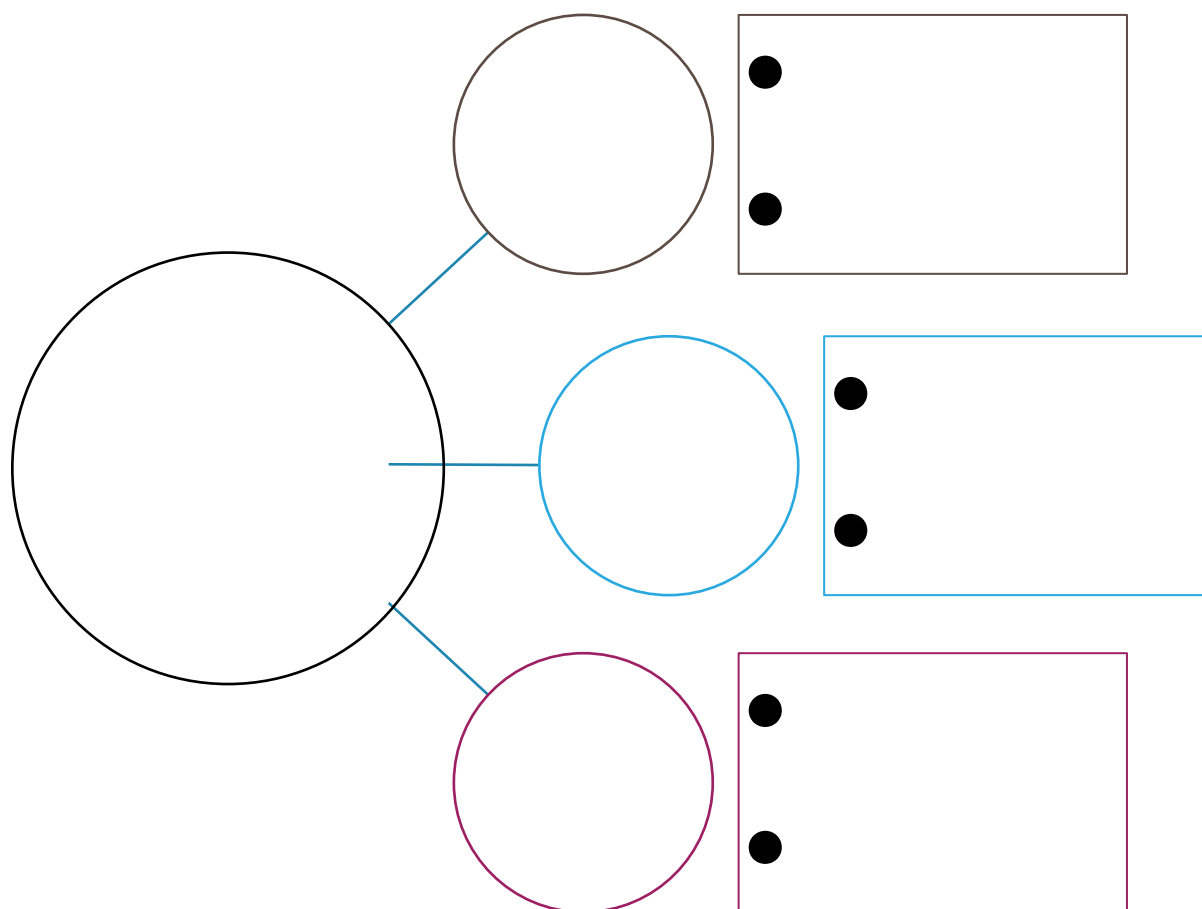
Semantic Mapping

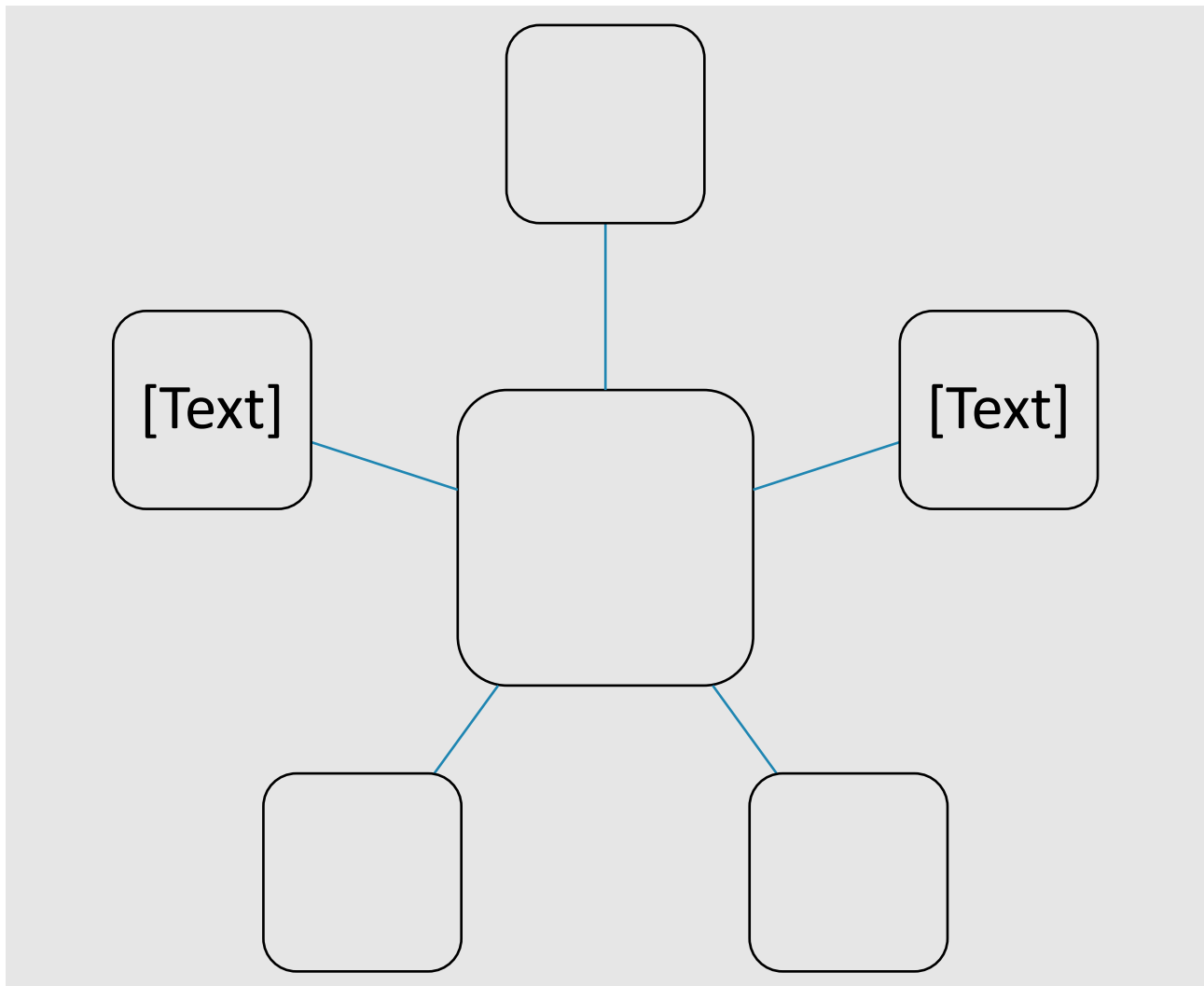
Semantic mapping is a graphic organizer that can help students build their vocabulary by visually displaying a word or phrase and a set of related words or concepts.

How to teach semantic mapping:

1. Have students choose a word they don't know from a text they (or you) are reading.
2. Use a blank map or begin to draw a map or web. Simple shapes work best, such as circles, squares, triangles, or rectangles.
3. Place the unknown or unfamiliar word in the center.
4. Have the student pronounce the word. You may need to model first.
5. Read the text around the word to see if there are related words you can add to the map.
6. Look up the word using a print or online dictionary or thesaurus to find the definitions and synonyms.
7. Find words and phrases that fit with the meaning. Find pictures (from the internet or magazines), draw pictures, or write words that help illustrate the meaning of the word.
8. Add these words, phrases, and images to the map.
9. Reread the text, asking students to apply the meaning of the word to the text. If needed, discuss that many words have more than one meaning, and that it's important to know how the word is being used. This might mean a broader conversation about context.
10. Have students share, compare, and discuss their maps with peers.



Semantic Mapping Example: Transportation**Semantic Mapping Template A**

Semantic Mapping Template B**Frayer Chart**

This graphic organizer (shown on the next page) can be an effective way to introduce a new vocabulary word in the context of a story or academic content.

Steps for Using the Frayer Chart

1. Place the target word in the center of the chart.
2. Solicit a list of characteristics of the word or concept from the students and place those in the upper right box.
3. Guide students to generate an accurate definition in the upper left box.
4. Ask students to generate examples for the lower left box. These are often examples from their lives and help to create personal connections.
5. Ask students to generate nonexamples to put in the lower right box. Nonexamples help students to avoid misconceptions.



Frayer Chart Example

DEFINITION If people are emancipated, they are freed from unpleasant or unfair social, political, or legal restrictions.	CHARACTERISTICS freedom separation have power you didn't have before no one controlling you
EXAMPLES turning 18 U.S. breaking from Britain leaving the military after being drafted enslaved people gaining freedom after the Civil War an individual or group gaining rights	NONEXAMPLES school contract military jail tyranny (e.g., North Korea) held against will/enslaved

emancipation

Frayer Chart Template

DEFINITION	CHARACTERISTICS
EXAMPLES	NONEXAMPLES



Writing Organizers

Most graphic organizers for writing are specific to a prompt or type of writing, such as narrative, persuasive, or informational. Below are basic writing graphic organizers that students can use to get started with narrative or persuasive writing. Modify graphic organizers for younger students by having them begin by mapping out their story using pictures and phrases.

Narrative Writing

Narrative writing tells a story. This type of writing can be:

1. Fiction to entertain and describe (e.g., fantasy, tall tales, realistic)
2. Nonfiction to inform or describe (e.g., biography, essay, instructions, memoir)

Narrative Writing Personal, Fact, or Fiction	
Name:	Date:
Title:	
<p>Beginning: Create a situation or establish a theme (central topic, subject, or message in your story). Try to get the reader's attention with something that's interesting, different, or introduces a surprising fact. Include some information that familiarizes the reader with the narrator (storyteller or speaker) or characters in your story.</p>	
<p>Middle: Step by step, describe when and where the story takes place, what happens, and why the main theme or event is happening. Try to include some experiences and sensory details to make the reader feel like they are with you (for example, sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes).</p>	



Narrative Writing Personal, Fact, or Fiction
<p>Ending or Conclusion: Tell what happened after the main event. You might also share a lesson about what the narrator or writer learned and how their life is changed or different.</p>

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing is a form of nonfiction that requires students to develop logical arguments. This type of writing helps students learn how to research facts about and formulate specific reasons for their opinions. They also learn how writing can influence and change another's thinking or beliefs — and sometimes actions.

Persuasive Writing	
Name:	Date:
<p>Goal or Thesis Statement: This “topic” sentence describes one side of an arguable viewpoint without providing reasons yet. What is the thesis or point you are trying to argue?</p>	
<p>Support/Main Reasons: Brainstorm the reasons, evidence, and details to support your position. You can write these on a semantic map, index cards, or sticky notes — or create a T-chart and brainstorm reasons to support both your position and the counter-position. When you finish brainstorming, use this section to briefly state the three main reasons that would convince someone that your thesis or point of view is valid.</p> <p>Reason 1:</p> <p>Reason 2:</p> <p>Reason 3:</p>	



Persuasive Writing

Facts or Examples: Write down some facts or examples that support each reason and help you validate (authorize or confirm) your argument.

Fact or Example 1:

Fact or Example 2:

Fact or Example 3:

Conclusion: Summarize the most important details of the argument and state what the reader should believe or do based on your argument. You may also offer advice or pose questions back to the reader to prompt them to reflect on your topic or position.

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