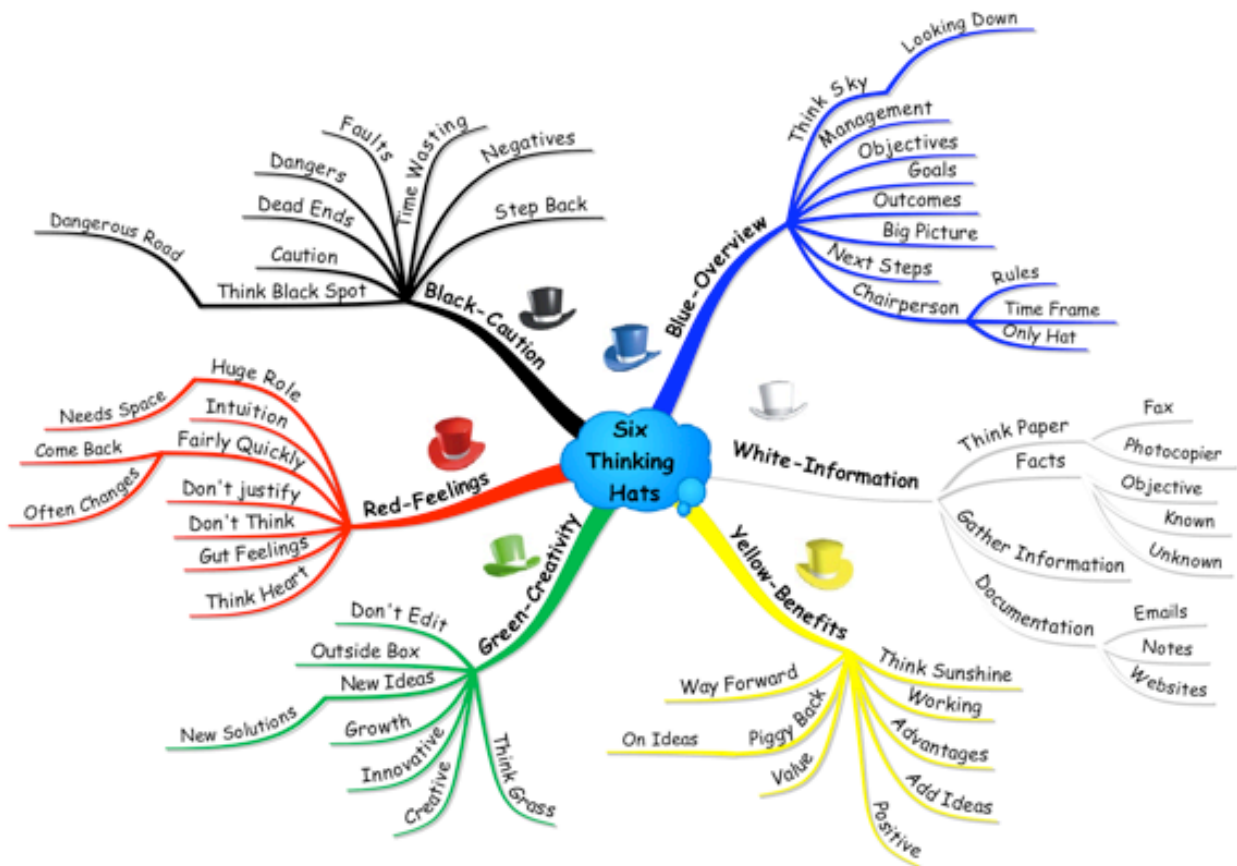


# The Six Thinking Hats - A free MindMapTutor



## The thinking gurus

Edward de Bono is one of the leading authorities in the field of creative thinking. He also provides tools for **lateral thinking**. He is also the originator of '**parallel thinking**' and also developed the '**Six Thinking Hats**' as a thinking framework.

Tony Buzan is the inventor of the Mind Map. He uses the term **Radiant Thinking**, which sees the brain's thinking pattern as a gigantic Branching Association Machine. **The more you learn and gather information in an integrated, radiating, organised manner, the easier it is to learn more.**

As you may know by now, my Website, [UsingMindMaps.com](http://UsingMindMaps.com) , reveals that I am a huge fan of Mind Mapping because of its benefits and the competitive advantage it gives you.

But, does this exclude other ways of thinking? In many ways over the years, my new found love for Mind Mapping actually had the exact opposite effect of what it promoted. I **became a thinking bigot!** I rejected everything that was not Mind Mapping and did not even want to read about other forms of thinking and note taking.

Yet, **everything is related and inter-related**. Once I realised this, I started to introduce **linear notes together with my Mind Maps** and promoted the Cornell Method in our [Learning Management Programme](#).

On [MindMapTutor.com](http://MindMapTutor.com), I started to introduce stories and linear notes in what I now label '**MindMapTutors**'.

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An article like this one is a **MindMapTutor**. It contains a Mind Map overview as well as text expanding and illustrating the concepts.

## Origins of Western Thinking

Western thinking has its roots in the three Greek masters, Socrates, Aristotle and Plato (SAP). This resulted in what I term 'SAPPY THINKING'.

It is based on the following notions:

- You put forth an option
- You then have to prove that it is the correct option
- You build up arguments to defend your option

Others, in the meantime, are out to prove that your option is incorrect. They look for holes in your argument.

This sparks great debate, but also great arguments.

In the 'Six Thinking Hats' method, this is just one of the thinking hats. There are five others. See if you can recognise this hat after you have read the article.

Use the Six Thinking Hats in any order. By having a Mind Map framework, you are able to slot your thinking into the correct hat and evaluate the 'whole picture' much easier.

Also, use the Mind Map in this article to remember the six hats. The branches are colour coded to match the hats. I have also labelled the branches for black and white printers (and the colour blind folk).

## The Blue Hat - Overview



**Think Sky!** You are looking down at the problem from the sky. You have a bird's eye view of the situation.

This hat is often controlled by one person in the group. This person normally serves as the chairperson, if it is a brainstorming session. The rules are defined, the time frame is managed and the wearing of one hat at a time is enforced.

Of course, if you are using the Six Thinking Hats to solve a problem on your own, you have to ensure that you only wear one hat at a time. This sounds easier than it really is.

Other Key Words that come to mind are:

- Goals
- Outcomes
- Objectives
- Big Picture

The next steps are then determined from this.

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## The White Hat - Information



**Think Paper!** Think Fax machine, photocopier, books.

Gather all information you have on the subject. This includes all forms of documentation, including Emails, Notes, Word Documents, Spreadsheets, Websites, Blogs. Once you have gathered the information, look at the facts. Try to be as objective as possible. Look at the known facts as well as the unknown facts.

An example of a known fact is: We know that the final game is in four weeks time. Who is going to be in the final, is perhaps not known. The former is a known fact, the latter and unknown fact. Both are often valuable in our thinking process.

## The Yellow Hat - Benefits



**Think Sunshine!** Think of the positive, warm feeling of sun rays.

This looks at what is working. Focus on what's working, not what is broken. Look for advantages of the current way and how it can be leveraged.

This is the time to add ideas. Look for positive ideas and try to add value. Piggy Back on other people's ideas and see if you can make it even better.

Focus on the idea, not the person. An idea is often rejected, just because it came from a certain person.

Finally, look for a way forward.

## The Green Hat - Creativity



**Think Grass!** Think vegetation. Think growth.

This is the creative hat. The green represents growth. Only by being creative and innovative can you grow. New ideas should be tabled without criticism. The other hats will evaluate whether you are going to implement it or not.

Think outside the box. We often limit ourselves by 'boxing' our thoughts. I 'boxed' my thoughts by not looking at other thinking methods, as I thought Mind Mapping was 'it'!

Once I thought out of the box, I realised that I could still have articles like this, which uses Mind Maps, stories, anecdotes and examples and still teach and promote the use of Mind Maps and Mind Mapping.

**Don't edit your ideas at this point. There will be a time and place to edit. This is not it.**

In this way, you will generate new ideas and new solutions - solutions that you would not have naturally thought of.

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## The Red Hat - Feelings



**Think Heart!** Think blood. Think about 'seeing red'.

Emotions and feelings play a huge role in our lives and therefore need their own space. This is where you state how you feel about the matter. Often the heart thinks differently to the mind.

Many good decisions have been made on gut feelings.

When wearing this hat, don't think about what you feel. Don't justify your thinking.

This can normally be done very quickly as you are expressing what you are feeling and not thinking about it. A Mind Map is a great way to jot down your feelings in a short space of time.

Revisit your feelings after you have gone through the other hats. You may be surprised how your feelings have changed. If your feelings have changed, it is good. It means that the method is working.

## The Black Hat - Caution



**Think black spot on a dangerous road!**

This is where you express caution. Caution is just a checkpoint to ensure that you are not running into dead ends. It also highlights the dangers and faults in your thinking.

While it focuses on the negatives, it is there to prevent time wasting.

Step back and have another look at whether your thinking is valid.

It is important to look at the idea and not the person. This is not an opportunity to attack the person.

## Benefits of the Six Thinking Hats

- Streamlines your thinking
- Creates Mental Energy
- Enables you to make quick decisions
- Gets real group participation
- Focuses on the issue, not the person

I'm sure you will find many other benefits once you start using them.

You could create **one Mind Map with six branches** for a small problem. You could also create a **separate Mind Map for each hat**, if the problem is a bigger one.

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I've tried to give a simple overview of the 'Six Thinking Hats'. I hope that it is simple enough for you to understand the principles, yet have enough information for you to get a good grasp of the subject.

To paraphrase the great Einstein: **I've tried to make things as simple as possible, but not simpler.**

So, what are you waiting for? Put on a thinking hat and get going!

Look out for the other MindMapTutors on [UsingMindMaps.com](http://UsingMindMaps.com).