One effective form of brainstorming is mind mapping. A mind map is a visual representation of your ideas, consisting of words, images and colours, and can help you to:

• focus on your research topic/question
• structure and plan your assignment
• combine one or more types of major thought relationships
• identify relationships between ideas/concepts.

Stage 1

You can create a mind map on paper, whiteboard or digitally, using visual mapping software such as FreeMind. To begin:

• write your topic in the centre of a blank page
• associate your ideas freely anywhere on the page and do not filter out ideas.
Stage 2

When you have run out of ideas:
• consider each item and determine how this point is related to other points and to your topic
• map relationships with lines, arrows, colours, images and bold type.

Stage 3

Use the relationships you have identified to reorganise your ideas.