

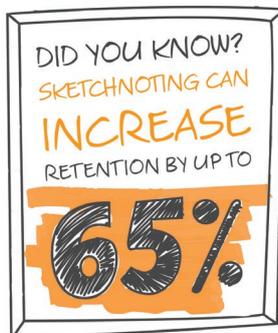
Sketchnoting

so much more than scribbles

Are you good at taking notes, but not so good at actually remembering what you've learned? It might be worth giving sketchnoting a try. As the name suggests, this is a note taking technique that combines written notes and visual cues, in the form of sketches, rather than plain old words. And, whether you're a natural born Picasso or don't have a creative bone in your body, it's something everyone can benefit from – including your students.

So, what is sketchnoting?

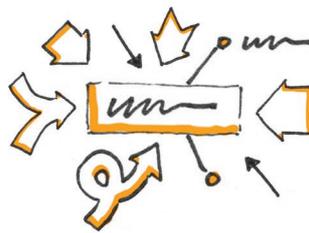
To put it simply, sketchnoting (also known as graphic recording), is a twist on traditional notetaking that involves blending written notes with visuals and sketches to retain information in a more creative way. Sketchnoting is actually a form of mnemonics, which are systems designed to help us remember things by connecting images with text. It might sound like doodling, but recording information visually can actually help us synthesise it in a way that writing can't – significantly increasing our ability to remember what we've learned. Sketchnoting can be especially useful in subjects like history or art, where you need to retain facts about a particular person or place, in fact research has found that sketchnoting can increase retention of information by up to 65%*!!



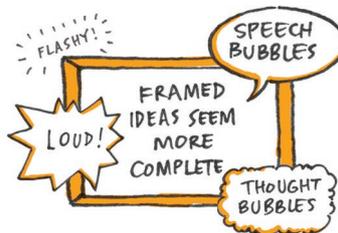
What are the foundations of sketchnoting?

The best way to start your sketchnoting journey is to learn a few 'corner stone' techniques. Once you and your students master these, you'll find that sketchnoting becomes much easier, faster and more fun. A few of the most useful include:

- **Connectors:** They are used to link different thoughts or objects (like in a 'mind map'). They can be as simple as a basic line or as complex as a 3D arrow.



- **Bullets:** Get your students to experiment with different ways to bullet point their ideas. Go wild... think dots, bubbles, hearts, stars or even lightning bolts.
- **Speech bubbles:** These are ideal for recording quotes.
- **Frames:** Sometimes called containers, these are shapes that section off different thoughts, ideas or quotes.



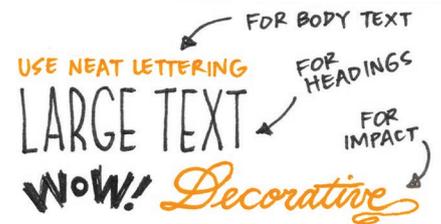
- **Shading:** This is a great way to add dimension to notes. Explore different techniques like 'cross-hatching' (lines crisscrossing each other) which can make shading easier to do.
- **People:** It's a good idea to get your students to develop their own way to draw people (even if it's just a simple stick figure). No matter what topic you're taking notes on, people do tend to feature, so this is a good one to get down pat!
- **Colour:** Encourage your students to introduce colour! In a page of blue and black pen, a burst of colour can be used to emphasise important information or to help organise and colour code different topics.

Here are a few other tips that will set your class up for sketchnoting success:

Start with a topic they're familiar with. Before you get your students to sketch out something connected to a lesson, why not get them to doodle about themselves first? That way they'll get comfortable with this new style. Give them a topic like their last holiday or their weekend and get them to recreate it with a combination of words and visual cues.

Practice handwriting:

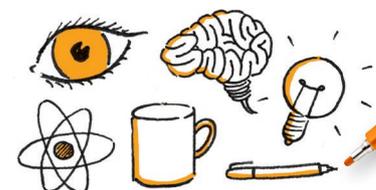
Visual notetaking isn't just about images, you also need to incorporate words to capture key facts. Encourage your students to get creative and practice different handwriting styles, whether it's block writing, cursive or even a graffiti style.



Create a library of key icons:

Your students' sketchnoting will become much more fluent if they have a toolkit of icons they've practiced and feel comfortable sketching. When it comes down to what kind of icons these should include – the sky's the limit. Think about the subjects you teach in your classroom and the things that regularly come up. Make a list of icons that will come in handy in your class and get your students to practice sketching their own version of these.

While kids tend to like routine, and may not embrace sketchnoting at first, it's worth being patient and giving it some time. Remember to keep it light and fun and reiterate that there's no right or wrong way to sketchnote – artistic skills do not matter! Even if you can't draw to save your life, you can still sketchnote with the best of them – and reap the rewards when exam time comes!



*John Medina, Brain Rules