

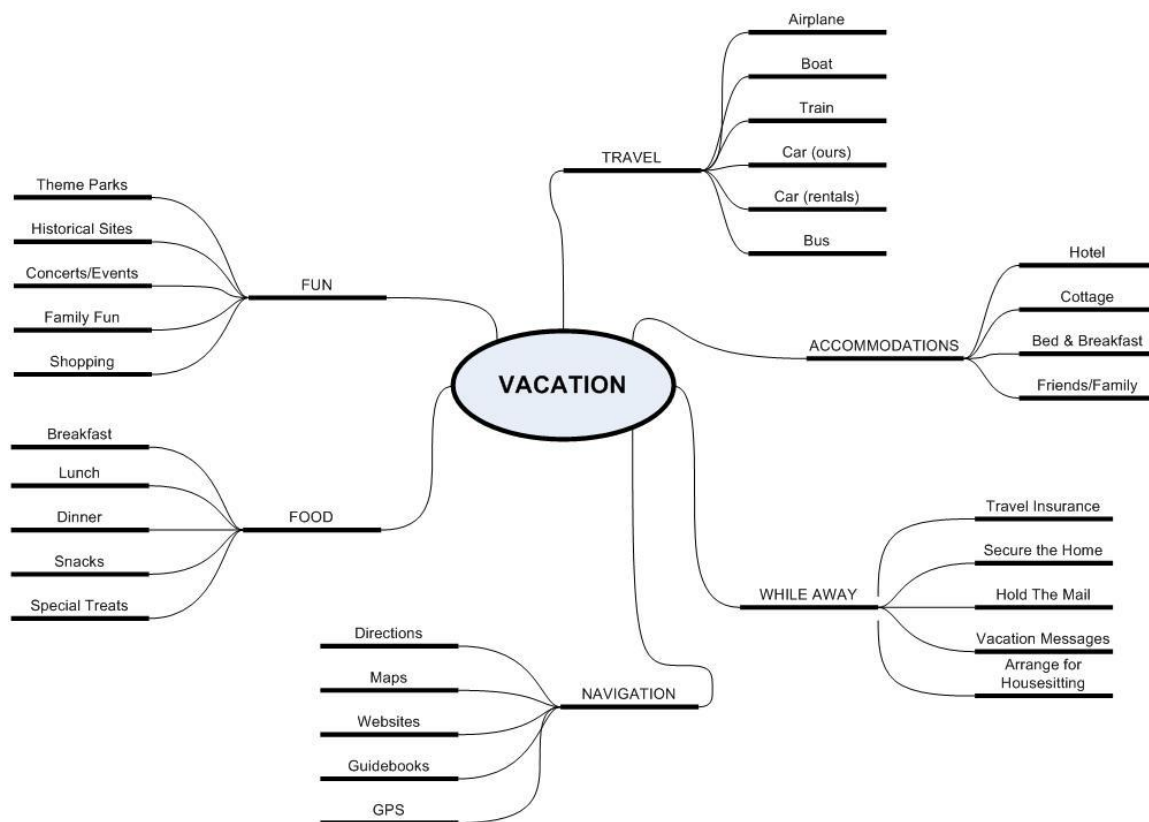
# How To Make a Mind Map – The Very Basic Method

An excerpt from **Unstuck Focused and Organized Using Mind Mapping**

## What Are The Parts of a Mind Map?

A mind map looks a lot like a **spider web**, a **root system** or the **branches of a tree**. Like these marvels of nature, a mind map has a central point. The center of the mind map is often a picture or symbol, but it may be 1 - 3 key words. The center names the subject of your mind map and the branches describe it.

Each of the branches represents an important part of the mind map's subject. The further out the branch you go, the more information you learn about each branch. Together, the branches give a good overall understanding of the subject of the mind map.



Let's look at how you would create the mind map shown above.

## Creating a Mind Map Using Pen and Paper

The simplest way to create a mind map is to use a piece of paper and a pen or a pencil.

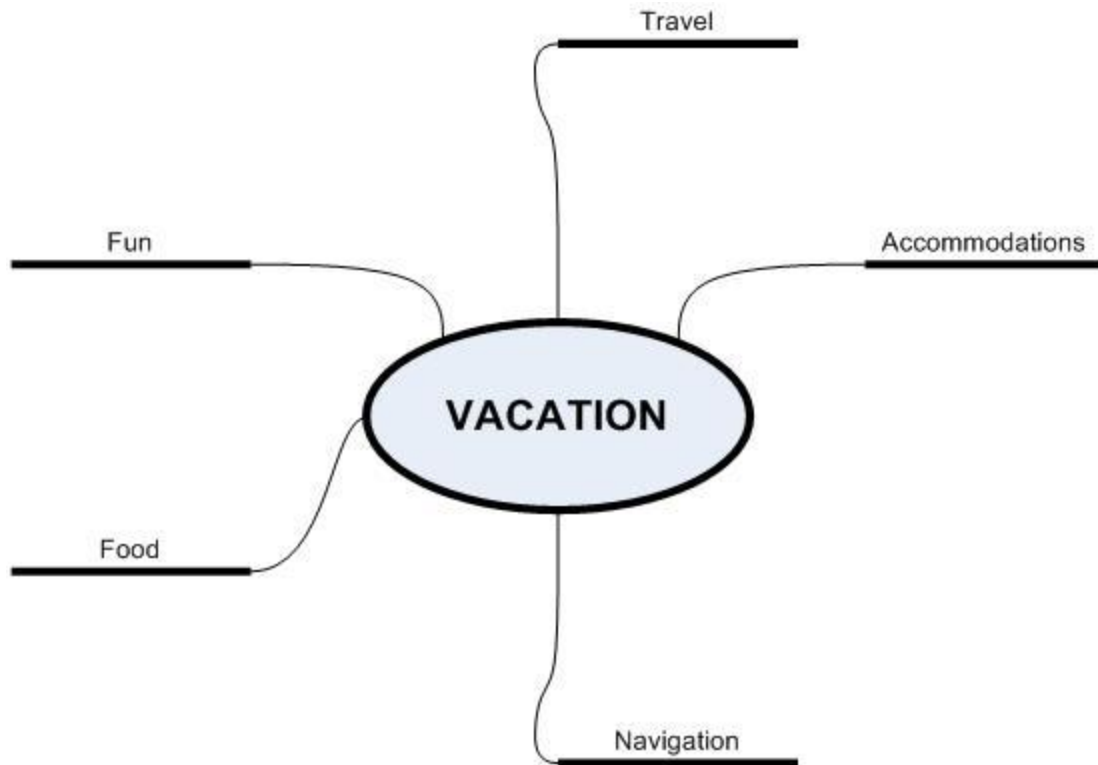
First, put your subject at the center of the piece of paper. Write a description of your mind map's subject there and then draw a big circle around it.

*For our example (which we created using software to make it look better), we're going to create a mind map about a vacation that we'd like to take. The subject is **vacation**.*



Next, write your major categories of the idea around the circle at the center of the map. Use lines to connect them back to the center.

*In this example, there are five main things (major categories) about the vacation that we want to plan. Each one will be its own branch of the mind map.*



The major categories that we're concerned about for our vacation are:

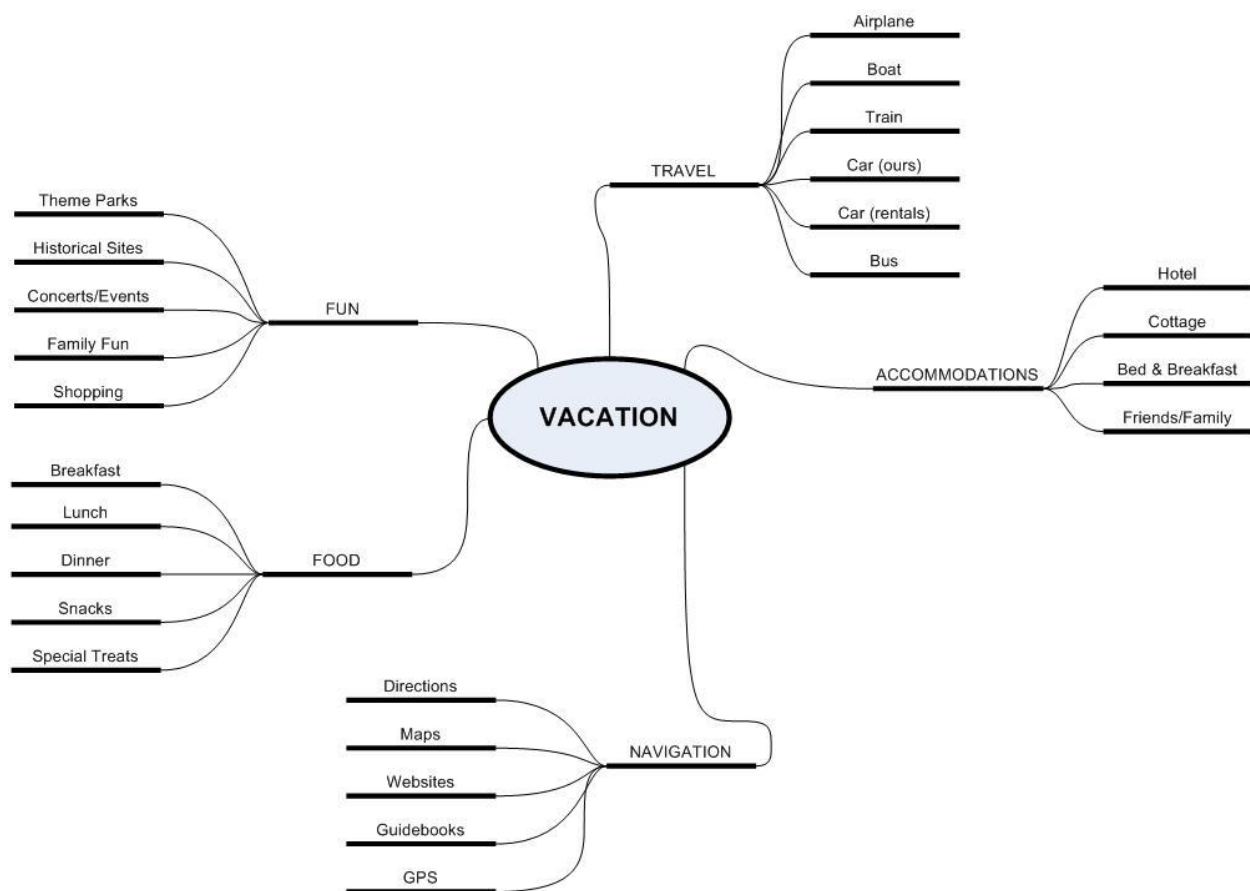
- Travel – how are we going to get there?
- Accommodations – where will we stay?
- Navigation – how will we find our way around when we go on vacation?
- Food – where and how will we eat? Are there special foods or restaurants that we want to experience??
- Fun – we're going to be on vacation somewhere we haven't been before, so how will we spend our time?

Next, for each major category, list its minor categories. Use lines to connect each major category to its minor category.

*In our example, we've taken each major category from the mind map:*

- *Travel*
- *Accommodations*
- *Navigation*
- *Food*
- *Fun*

*We've found 4 – 6 important points for each major category and we've added them to the mind map.*



*In more detail:*

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**Travel:** we have to find a way to get to our travel destination. The possible means of travel include:

- Airplane – if our destination is far enough away, we'll fly.
- Boat – depending on distance and location, we might enjoy travelling by sea.
- Train – if we don't care about having our own vehicle and our destination is on the same continent, we might be able to take the train.
- Car (ours) – maybe we can take our own car if it's a short trip.
- Car (rental) – or maybe we'll want to rent a car, either at home or when we get to our destination.
- Bus – and there's always the bus, subject to constraints similar to trains and cars.

Don't forget that we may need to use more than one of these means of travel during the course of our vacation.

**Accommodations:** we need somewhere to leave our luggage and rest during our vacation. Popular types of accommodations include:

- Hotel – this can give us the best combination of luxury and privacy.
- Cottage – if we're staying near a lake or by the sea, a cottage may make for a quaint and peaceful place to stay.
- Bed and breakfast – these can be ideal places for couples to stay.
- Friends/family – you may be fortunate enough to have friends or family who leave near your vacation destination, which could both save you a lot of time and give you a chance to visit.

We didn't put camping as a minor category on this mind map because, frankly, we hate camping and roughing it.

**Navigation:** how will we know where to go when we get there? Here are the popular options:

- Directions – we can ask our friends and family how to get to our destination and other points of interest.
- Maps – we can always buy maps or atlases to be able find our way around.
- Websites – many websites have maps tell you how to get to their locations. And, of course, there's always the online mapping services like Google Maps.
- Guidebooks – in addition to maps, guidebooks are excellent sources of information.
- GPS – Global Positioning Systems are especially useful for driving to a destination and sometimes they work well when hiking or walking.

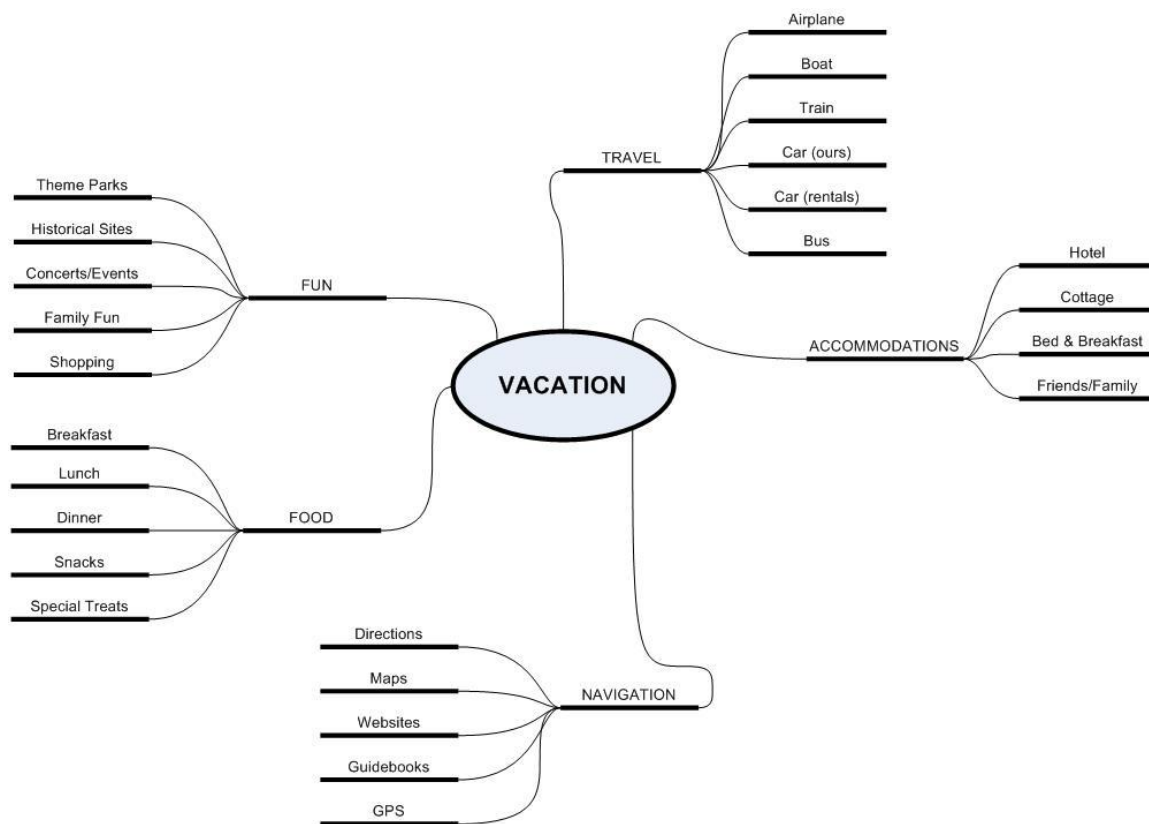
**Food:** everyone has to eat! In general terms, here's what you might want to think about for meal planning:

- Breakfast – where can you get the best start for your day? Also, do you get free breakfast where you are staying?
- Lunch/Dinner/Supper – these typically aren't covered by your hotel, so you'll want to know where you can get these meals.
- Snacks – you're probably going to want to know where you can get junk food and convenience food, especially if you're travelling with children.
- Special treats – even if you're not a foodie, you'll probably want to know what the local cuisine is and where you can find it.

**Fun:** you're going to want to enjoy yourself while you are away from home! Here are some common diversions to think about when vacationing:

- Theme parks – if you're near Orlando, FL (as an example) you're going to have to scope out Walt Disney World and the other theme parks.
- Historical sites – what can you learn about your destination?
- Concerts/events – what special events can you enjoy while on vacation?
- Family fun – what other ways can you keep the kids entertained?
- Shopping – where can you buy souvenirs or merchandise that's not available back home?

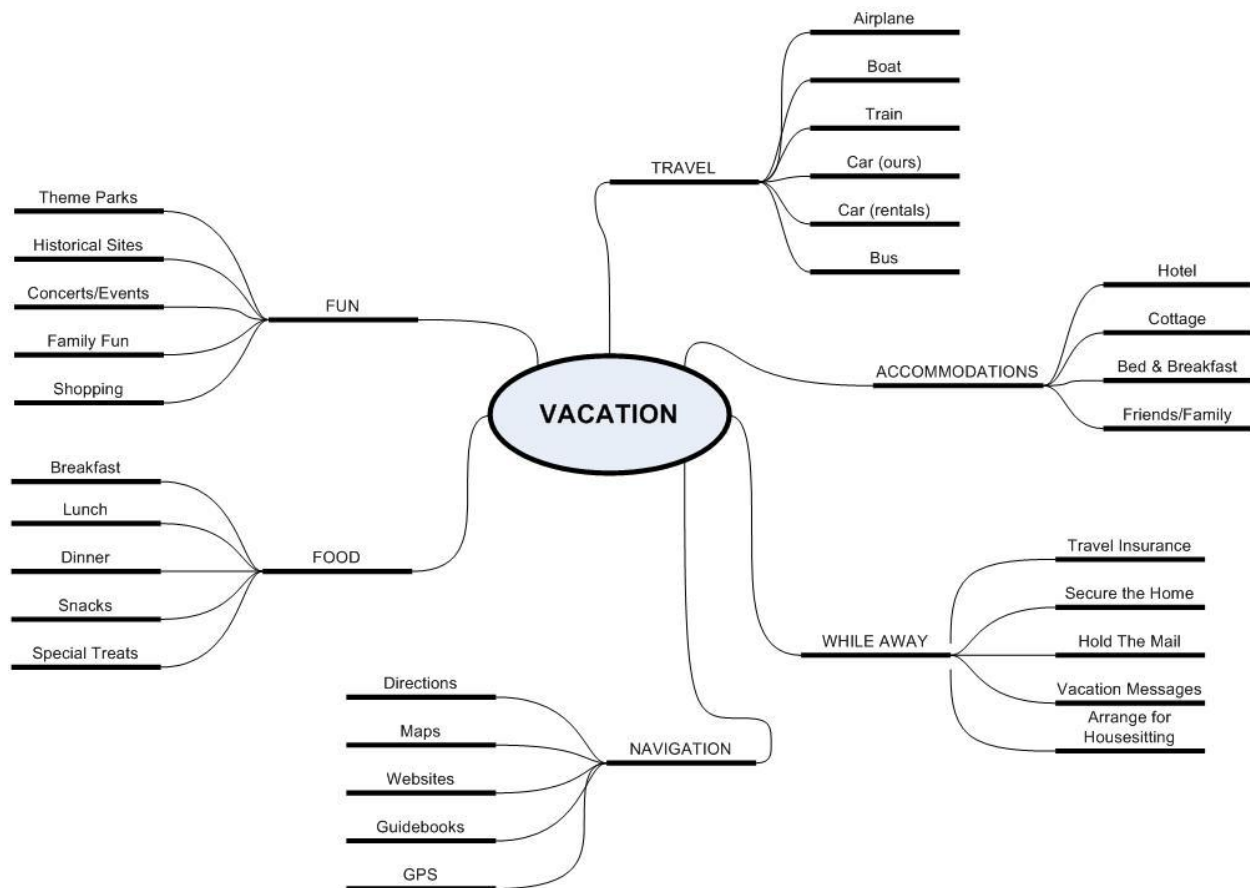
*Continue this process until the map feels complete and take a look at the whole thing. Here it is again:*



**You think it over and suddenly you realize that something's missing. Oh no! After looking at this mind map, you notice that you haven't thought about travel insurance and house sitting?** What about the mail and other things that you'd worry about while you're away?

The time and pressure constraints that you face each day make it all too easy to miss important things. The mind map helps you see a situation clearly, especially if you've had some time to reflect on your problem. You can use the mind map to spot the holes and then think of what you need to do to fill them.

Fortunately, it's really easy to make changes to a mind map. We'll create a new major category called WHILE AWAY and add it to the mind map:

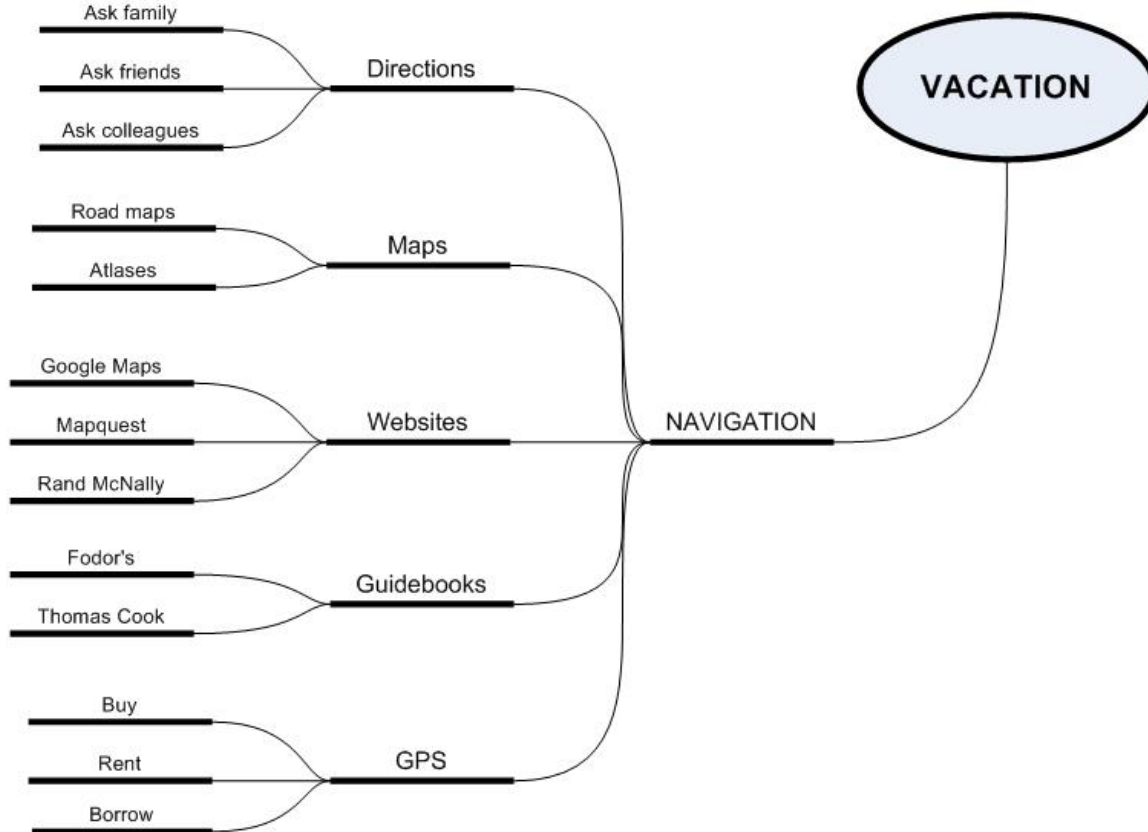


So, under WHILE AWAY, you think of the following things that you need to take care of before you leave:

- Travel insurance – make sure it covers the entire vacation.
- Secure the home – lock everything up, cut the lights, etc.
- Hold the mail – talk to the post office about this.
- Vacation messages – change the message on the answering machine (or should you? Think that one over carefully.)
- Arrange for housekeeping – have a friend check in on your home every few days.



Let's look at an even deeper example. Let's say you want to look at all of your options for NAVIGATION. In this example, we're just going to focus on that branch of the mind map to keep things easier to see:



You can see that things start to become even more concrete at the lower level of detail, where you identify your options for each possible decision. Keep adding (or removing or changing) the parts of the mind map until you feel satisfied that you've captured everything.

You would then complete this exercise for every major category that you've identified so far.

Look at your mind map carefully after you think you have all of your major and minor categories. Try to think about what's not on it yet. Here are some other things that you might think of after looking at the mind map:

- Do I have my passport?
- Do I have all necessary immunizations?
- Do I need to buy some local currency if I'm travelling to another country?
- Do I need to make sure I have enough of my medications with me while I'm travelling?
- Will I want books and magazines to read?
- If I take a computer, will there be wireless Internet access?
- Will my cell phone work while I'm on vacation?
- Do I have any work assignments that are due while I'm supposed to be on vacation?
- Should I take my address book with me?
- What kind of souvenirs (including postcards) should I buy? Come to think of it, where are the post offices where I am staying?

You can go back to your mind map and find the appropriate spots to add these points. If they don't fit within your major categories, add more! You can always go back and change your mind map.

*This is an excerpt from a powerful new product called **Unstuck Focused and Organized Using Mind Mapping**. To learn more about it, [click here](#).*