

Selecting and Using Visual Tools

Read the following chart to learn about different visual tools and related activities you can assign to students. These activities are intended to help you generate ideas for incorporating visual tools into your own courses, and they can be assigned to students to work individually or in small groups.

Visual Tool	Description	Examples of Student Activities
Concept Map	A diagram showing the relationship between multiple concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a teacher education course, have students create a concept map to brainstorm ideas before writing their own teaching philosophies. In a physical therapy course, ask students to create a concept map demonstrating the relationships between concepts and propositions of flexibility. In a nutrition course, have students create a concept map to show the causes, effects, and prevention methods for childhood obesity. In a politics course, have students create a concept map to show the uses, risks, events, and media coverage related to nuclear power.
Timeline	A graphic representation of any chronology of events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In an art history course, have students conduct research and create a timeline of the current events, music, culture, and key people who influenced artists of the time. In a biology course, ask students to create a timeline of the cardiac cycle, or the sequence of events that take place for one heartbeat to occur. In a nursing course, ask students to create a timeline to show the chronology of a patient's symptoms and treatments.
Flowchart	A diagram that represents a sequence or process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a business ethics course, have students use a flowchart of an ethical decision-making model to answer questions about a specific organization and its practices. In an electrical engineering course, have students create their own flowchart clearly showing the steps for short circuit troubleshooting. In a clinical psychology course, ask students to create a flowchart demonstrating the process of diagnosing and treating patients.
Concept Circle	A diagram that shows similarities, differences, and distinguishing qualities of concepts by using distance, overlapping, and circle size to represent relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a business course, ask students to create concept circles that show the different stakeholders in an organization, their relative importance, and how they relate to one another. In a geography course, give students a group of partially completed concept circles representing how different nation groups and states belong to each other and have them fill in the blanks. In an environmental studies course, ask students to create concept circles that show the relationship between various initiatives to combat climate change.