

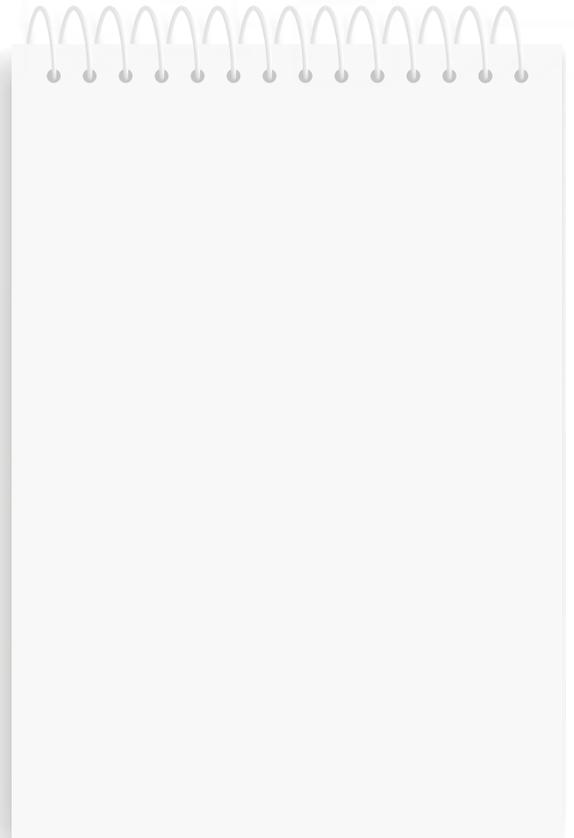
IT'S NOT WRITTEN IN THE STARS

Learn about some **snappy study skills** that are guaranteed to make sure what goes into your head stays there.

Become a **maestro of the mindmap**, a **freaky flashcarder** and learn the secrets of **nauling those notes** first time, every time.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- How the brain works (well, some of it)
- How and why mindmaps support learning
- Flashcards
- Making effective notes



Brains.

Studying is **a skill that can be learned** just like any other. You can get better at it. **And the better you get, the more you learn.**

It's tempting to think that learning is just something that just happens. After all, your brain is pretty good at it. Here are some **freaky brain facts** that you might find interesting.

You have **the largest brain of all vertebrates** (well not just you, you and all humans). Your brain makes up about 2 per cent of your body weight, and most of that is a bit of spongy grey stuff called your **cerebrum**, which is 85 per cent of the brain's weight. The rest is made of yoghurt. Not really.

Your cerebrum is right up the top of your brain and is in two halves. It's where all the clever stuff goes on like **vision, hearing, speech, reasoning, emotions and learning**. Your cerebrum is the bit that lets you recognise a KFC Supercharged Bacon & Cheese Zinger Burger in a large meal with a frozen Coke from 100 metres away, order one and eat it while scrolling through Instagram posts of cats playing the piano. It does that remarkable thing using its 86 billion nerve cells, or **neurons**, connected by trillions of connections, or **synapses**. Your ancestors would be proud of how you use that marvellous brain of yours.

It's also pretty good at learning stuff. From the moment you were born (or when you were boxed up in the factory for shipping from Amazon if you are in fact a robot) you started learning.

Now you are here in school you probably think that all of that learning stuff is **going pretty well, thanks, so give me all of the facts and my brainbox will take care of them.**

But no. You can **supercharge your learning** by learning some more learning, in the form of **study skills**. You can use them here, you can use them there and you can, as Dr Seuss said, use them everywhere.

So be like **The Cat in the Hat** and do this **Thing One** and **Thing Two**.

THING ONE: MAP IT

One of the great things about your brain is **it loves connections**. It's a connection-making machine. It loves nothing more than taking things in and joining them up to make sense of them. It's how learning happens.

And you can supercharge that process by using the natural way your brain processes information. You can do it by using **mindmaps** as part of your superb study skills set.

A mind map is an aid for your brain. It's a visual representation of all information relevant to the main idea in the form of a set of blobs connected by arrows or lines. A mind map for **GLOBAL WARMING** might include connections to **RECYCLING, FARMING, TRAVEL** and **ENERGY**. Each of those blobs may have related blobs, too. So, **TRAVEL** might have links to **FLYING, ELECTRIC CARS** or **CYCLING**. Each connection can be labelled with some relevant information.

So far, so what? **No worries**. You've probably used mindmaps before. **But do you know why they work?**

Remember your cerebrum? It's in two parts, the left and right hemispheres. Research by Nobel Prize winner Roger Sperry found that all the more you are able to **get both hemispheres working together the better you learn**. A mindmap lights up your hemispheres and gets those neurons firing because it uses both **visual and language functions of your brain** and its natural ability to create connections. Mindmaps are like Redbull for learning.

Mindmaps are also useful as a way of **recording what you are learning** so you can review it quickly. It's much faster and easier to look at a mindmap than read a page of text.

You can make **one mindmap or many**. You can **connect them up** using **colours, symbols, text** or **images** or you can have one per topic. They can be as big or small as you like.

Mindmappy loveliness.

GET MAPPING

What is so great about mindmaps is that **you make them** so you can use colours, letters and symbols to represent whatever you want.

There are tons of ways to mindmap. It's up to you what you do, so **make your mindmap your own** using these simple tips:

Go from the middle Using a blank page, write down the name of the topic in the centre.

Create branches by drawing lines A topic is made up of sub-topics or ideas. And each of these may have their own sub-topics. Some of these may relate to other branches, and you can join them together.

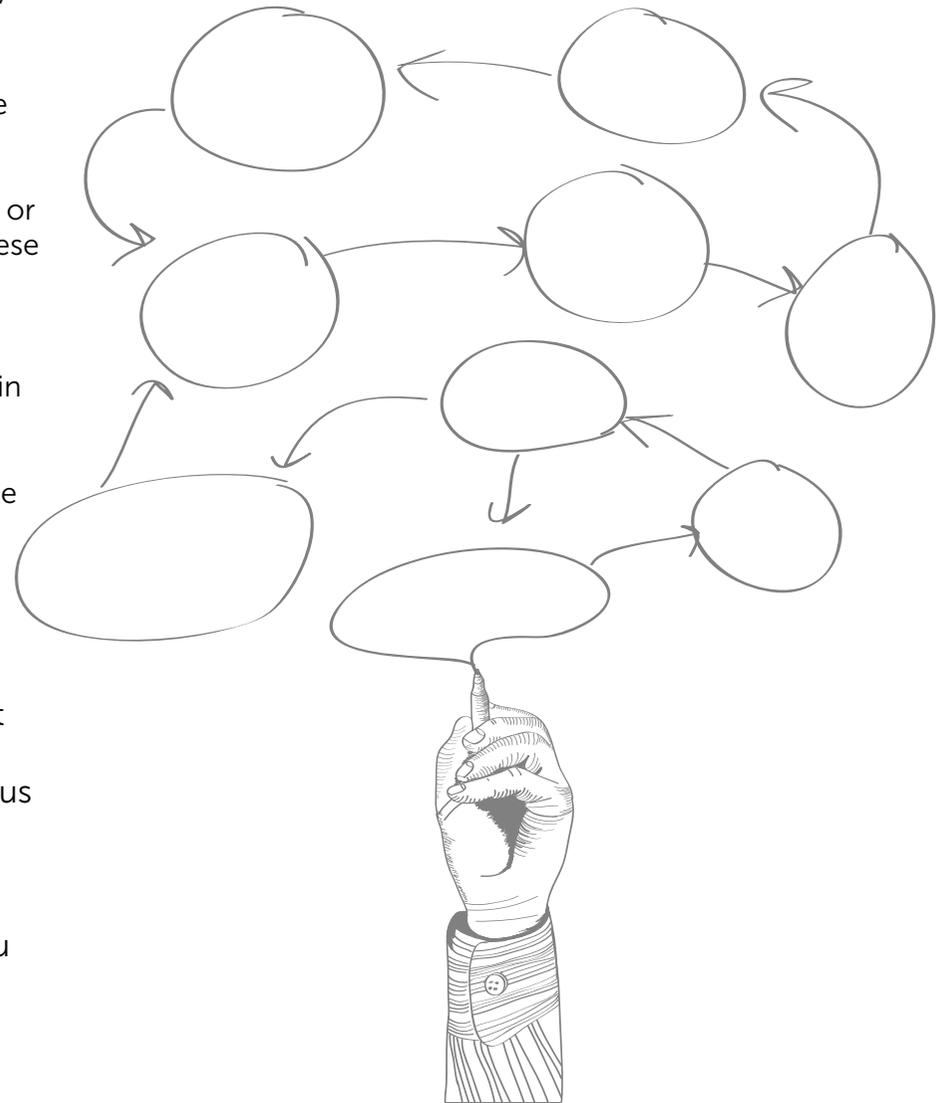
Use images and text Remember that you learn best when more of your brain is working. Text and images use different parts of your brain engine.

Colour it up Using a different colour for each sub-topic will make the most of your brain's many processing systems.

Keep it simple Clutter is bad. Try and use just one keyword on each branch of your map.

There are lots of apps that you can use to make mindmaps. But probably the easiest and fastest way is the old-fashioned way: **pen and paper**. You can always take a picture of your marvellous mindmap and save it.

So get to it. Mindmapping is a study skill that makes the most of what your brain does best. The more you do it, the more you learn. **Simples.**



THING TWO: I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE SEARCHING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE.

So says superhero **The Flash**. The Flash has a mysterious superpower known as the Speed Force that means he can run at impossible speeds, save lives and defend the weak and innocent.

While we can't help you with the defending bit, we can **help you study at super speed** with a technique called **Flashcards**.

You will be familiar with flashcards. They are cards with questions on one side and answers on the other. **Easy as**. In fact, it can be anything on each side of the card – words and their translations in another language or now, using **flashcard apps**, video, audio or images too.

Flashcards have been around for **over 150 years**. They work because they make you practice **active recall**.

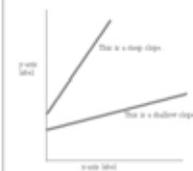
When you see the question one side of the card you have to work hard to remember the answer. Scientists say that **active recall strengthens the connections** between the memories that are stored in your cerebrum, and so you learn much more effectively.

So, if like The Flash, you want to do the impossible, **use flashcards** as part of your approach to learning.

SLOPE

Definition: The slope of a line **measures the steepness of the line.**

Sentence: The slope of the line showed that the bicyclist traveled at an average speed of 20 km/hr.



THING THREE: NAIL THE NOTES

Remember when we said there were **two things, Thing One** and **Thing Two**? Lie. Oops.

It's a little white lie though, because we are burning to tell you about **another totally awesome study skill** that will **make your head literally explode**. You will be known as Explody Head. People will say ***See that guy? The no head one? Head exploded.*** Srsly.

During your time at school, you have taken tons of **notes**. Tons and tons. We bet your notes, all collected together, would weigh 200 kilos. Maybe more. Lot of notes.

Like learning, people think it's something you just do. But just like learning, **you can get much better at it.**

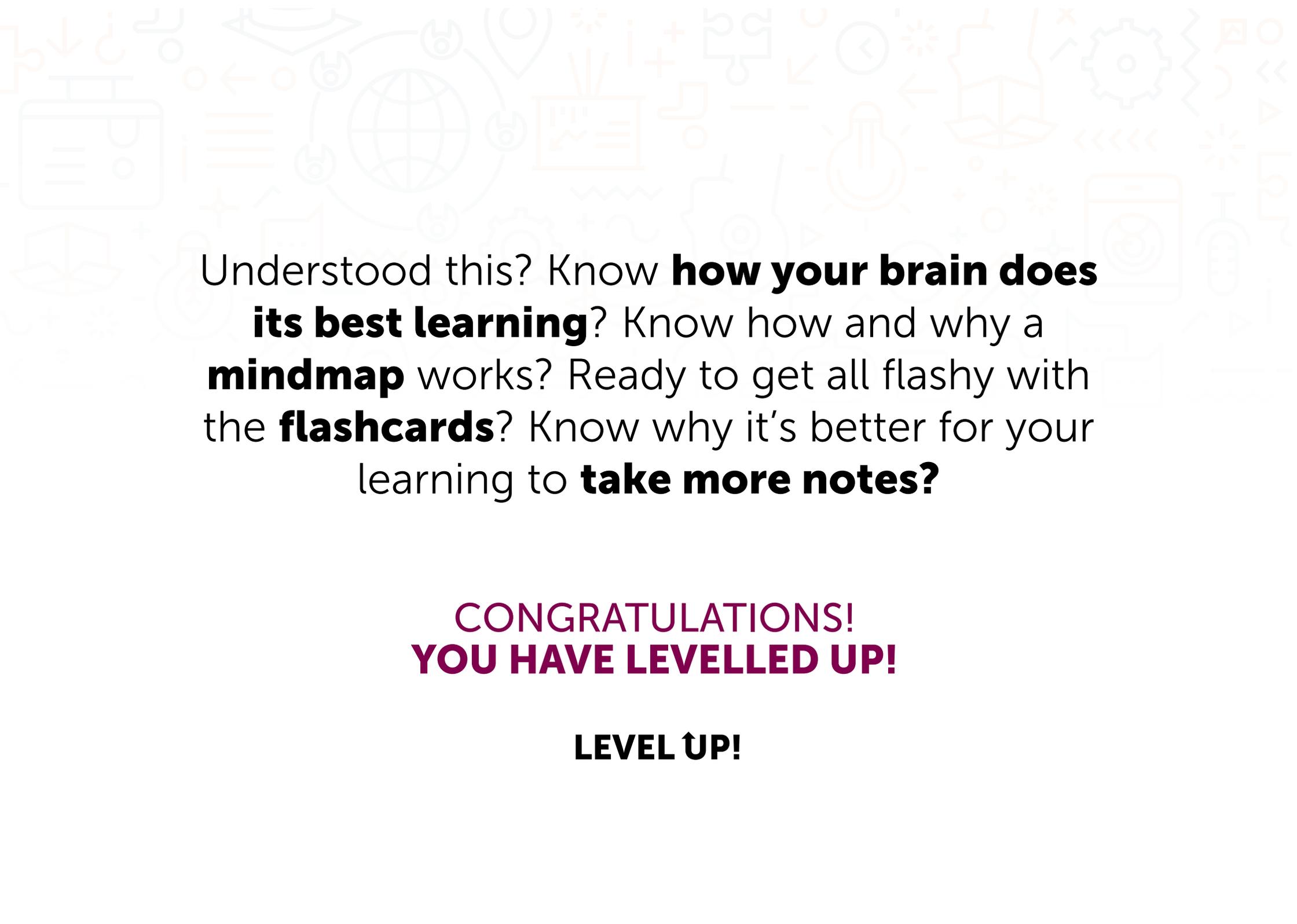
This is how you do it.

USE IMAGES Research says that using **images** in your notes helps you make better notes. It's an approach called **sketchnoting**. All you need to do is **start drawing alongside your written notes**. Even though you may be no Michelangelo, it doesn't matter as long as the drawings make sense to you. **You can sketchnote in maths, history, science or any other subject.**

REVISE THEM Writing notes down, saving them and then never looking at them until an exam or test doesn't work. Notes are best when they are **changed and added to** over and over again. The best time to revise notes is **immediately after you have taken them**. That's because it helps you to process the information more efficiently.

IPAD OR NOTEPAD What you **use to take notes** is one thing that people argue about. Is it better to handwrite them or type them? No-one really knows. You have to find your own best way of doing it. Perhaps the best thing to do is to **try both and see which works for you**. Are you an incredible iPadder or a marker maestro? Only you can find out.

Like time management, **nauling notetaking now** will give you a real advantage later. You'll be a greater natural noter than your second cousin whose name is Note, whose dog is called Notely and who lives on Note Avenue.



Understood this? Know **how your brain does its best learning**? Know how and why a **mindmap** works? Ready to get all flashy with the **flashcards**? Know why it's better for your learning to **take more notes**?

CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU HAVE LEVELLED UP!

LEVEL UP!