

Try any or all of these techniques for the next 60 minutes. Let these techniques create an expansive “thought cloud” from which you can sketch various images, icons & ideas. These exercises are meant to loosen you up, expand your mind and play a little.

Limit how much time you spend on each sketch — try around 30 seconds. And take a break between each technique you try:

Technique #1: Mind Mapping

1. In the center of the page, write your focus for your brainstorm.
2. Write words related to your focus around the center brainstorm thought. Once you run out of words, write down opposites and ANY thoughts, even if they seem unrelated.
3. Look at what you have and start choosing word items from the page and expand upon their relationships | combinations and new meanings. Write those elements on the page.
4. Circle items or group elements from the page to generate your ideas/ visual treatments for your sketches.

Technique #2: Three Column Word Lists (a columnar form of *Mind Mapping*)

1. On a large sheet of paper, make three columns. In the first column write as many words, phrases related to your point of focus for your design.
2. In the second column, pick an idea that interests you from the first column and write down a series of words related to it.
3. In the third column, write down words that are the opposite of the material you included in column one and | or column two.
4. Circle and connect relationships that span columns one through three. Then use the circled words to help sketch visual treatments and/or solutions.

Technique #3 Picture Associations

1. Google search your words. What images (besides the literal) make your eyes linger. The images may or may not directly associate with your project. If the images are not associated directly with your project they probably have a personal association or has some subconscious connection to the subject matter that, if you consciously thought about it, might resonate and connect more clearly with your project.
2. Find images which represent those personal associations. Try not to filter what comes to mind. As you collect images, start clustering/grouping your images together to see if you can create new, unexpected combinations/ideas or visuals.

Once you found a sketch idea that you like, iterate by playing with line weight, shape, scale, figure/ground (maybe try reversing it out of a color field), pattern, & contrast. Refine your best iteration for the class to see.

Technique #4: Similes

A simile is a literary technique that is used to compare two concepts. These concepts might be completely different in all aspects, but when they are being compared, there is that one distinct concept that draws a similarity between them. A characteristic style of the usage of similes is that the two objects that are being compared remain different in all matters and the reader has no doubt about the same. (*often using like or as in the sentence*)

Create a few similes and then sketch what that might look like in idea and in style. You can google similes to get an extensive listing to help with this technique.

Examples:

Sinking & Salamander:

The salamander sank like an anchor off a ship. (*The tail morphs into an anchor*)

The salamander swirled like water down a drain. (*The body winds into itself*)

Stumbling & Goat:

The goat stumbled like a drunken sailor.

(*The body is shaped like Bluto, but with tiny feet and slightly tipped*)

The goat was as blind as a bat.

(*Looks like a woodcut print that has a ghost print next to it — like sonar repetition*)

Prancing & King

The king was as proud as a peacock. (*Surround king silhouette with plumage like crown*)

The king walked lightly like a ballerina on stage. (*Research ballerina moves*)

Galloping & Hammer

The hammer was as loud as a lion. (*Tilt hammer, focus on point of contact*)

The hammer was sleek like a race horse. (*Stylistic treatment*)

Strutting & Whale:

The whale cut through the water like a razor. (*Massive & in great perspective, waters parting*)

The whale strutted as sweet as honey. (*Rounded forms, waves foaming*)