MindMapper Usage Guide

This guide will help you get the most out of MindMapper with detailed instructions, tips, and keyboard shortcuts.

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Getting Started

First Launch

When you first launch MindMapper, you'll see a welcome mind map with some sample nodes that demonstrate the basic features. Feel free to explore and experiment with it.

Creating a New Mind Map

There are several ways to create a new mind map:

1. **From Template**: Click the "New" button in the toolbar and select a template
2. **Menu**: File → New (`Ctrl+N`)
3. **Keyboard**: Press `Ctrl+N`

Available templates:
- **Blank**: Start with a single root node
- **Brainstorming**: Pre-built structure with Planning, Research, Implementation, and Review sections

Creating and Editing Nodes

Creating Nodes

MindMapper makes it easy to quickly build your mind map:

- **Child Node**: Select a node and press `Tab` (creates a child)
- **Sibling Node**: Select a node and press `Enter` (creates a sibling at the same level)

- **From Toolbar**: Use the "Add Child" or "Add Sibling" buttons in the right sidebar

Editing Node Text

1. **Double-click** the node you want to edit
2. Type your new text
3. Press `Enter` or click outside to save
4. Press `Escape` to cancel editing

Deleting Nodes

- Select a node and press `Delete` or `Backspace`
- Note: You cannot delete the root node
- Deleting a node will also delete all its children

Organizing Your Mind Map

Drag and Drop

You can reorganize your mind map by dragging nodes:

1. Click and hold on a node
2. Drag it to a new location
3. Release to drop

The layout will automatically adjust to accommodate the new structure.

Collapsing and Expanding

- Click the collapse/expand icon on a node to hide or show its children
- Useful for focusing on specific parts of large mind maps

Customizing Appearance

Node Styling

Select any node and use the right sidebar to customize:

Colors:
- Background color
- Text color
- Border color

Style Options:
- Border width (1-5px)
- Border radius (rounded corners)
- Font size
- Font weight
- Padding

Icons:
- Choose from a variety of emoji icons
- Icons appear next to the node text

Theme

Toggle between light and dark themes:
- Click the sun/moon icon in the toolbar
- Or press `Ctrl+T`
- Your preference is saved automatically

File Operations

Saving Your Work

Save (`Ctrl+S`):
- If you've already saved the file, it overwrites the existing file
- If it's a new map, you'll be prompted to choose a location

Save As (`Ctrl+Shift+S`):
- Always prompts for a new location
- Useful for creating copies or renaming

File Format:
- Mind maps are saved as `.mindmap.json` files
- These are JSON files with a specific structure (see DATA_SCHEMA.md)

Opening Files

Open (`Ctrl+O`):
1. Click File → Open or press `Ctrl+O`
2. Select a `.mindmap.json` file
3. The mind map will load and replace your current map
4. If you have unsaved changes, you'll be prompted to save first

Auto-Save

MindMapper tracks unsaved changes:
- A small orange indicator appears next to the map name when you have unsaved changes
- You'll be prompted before closing if there are unsaved changes

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Import and Export

Exporting

Export to PDF (`Ctrl+E`):
- Creates a vectorial PDF of your mind map
- The viewport is automatically adjusted to fit the entire map
- Perfect for presentations or printing

Export to JSON:
- Creates a standalone JSON file
- Can be shared or backed up separately

Importing

MindMapper can import from multiple formats:

JSON Files (`.json`):
- Standard MindMapper format
- Preserves all styling and structure

Markdown Files (`.md` , `.markdown`):
- Converts Markdown headings to a hierarchical mind map
- `#` becomes level 1 (root children)
- `##` becomes level 2 (grandchildren)
- `###` and deeper create nested nodes

Example Markdown:

```
# Project Planning
## Phase 1
### Research
### Design
## Phase 2
### Development
### Testing
```

This creates a mind map with "Project Planning" as children of the root, "Phase 1" and "Phase 2" as the next level, and so on.

Using Templates

Templates provide pre-built mind map structures for common use cases.

Accessing Templates

1. Click the "New" button in the toolbar
2. A dropdown menu appears with available templates
3. Click on a template to load it

Available Templates

Blank:
- Single root node
- Perfect for starting from scratch

Brainstorming:
- Pre-structured with 4 main branches:
- 📋 Planning (Goals & Objectives, Timeline)
- 🔍 Research (Data Collection, Analysis)
- ⚙️ Implementation (Development, Testing)

- ✅ Review (Feedback, Iteration)
- Color-coded sections for easy visual organization

Creating Your Own Templates

While there's no built-in template creator yet, you can:

1. Create a mind map with your desired structure
2. Save it as a template file
3. Use "Open" to load it whenever you need it

Navigation

Zooming

- **Zoom In**: `Ctrl++` or click the zoom in button
- **Zoom Out**: `Ctrl+-` or click the zoom out button
- **Reset Zoom**: `Ctrl+0`
- **Mouse Wheel**: Scroll to zoom (if supported)

Panning

- **Click and Drag**: Click on empty canvas space and drag to pan
- **Arrow Keys**: Use arrow keys to pan (if no node is selected)

Fit to Screen

- **Keyboard**: `Ctrl+1`
- **Menu**: View → Fit to Screen
- Automatically adjusts the zoom and position to show the entire mind map

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Keyboard Shortcuts

File Operations

Shortcut	Action
`Ctrl+N`	New mind map
`Ctrl+O`	Open mind map
`Ctrl+S`	Save mind map
`Ctrl+Shift+S`	Save As
`Ctrl+E`	Export to PDF

Editing

Shortcut	Action
`Tab`	Create child node
`Enter`	Create sibling node
`Delete` / `Backspace`	Delete selected node
`Ctrl+Z`	Undo
`Ctrl+Y` / `Ctrl+Shift+Z`	Redo
`Double-click`	Edit node text
`Escape`	Cancel editing

Navigation

Shortcut	Action
`Ctrl++`	Zoom in
`Ctrl+-`	Zoom out
`Ctrl+0`	Reset zoom
`Ctrl+1`	Fit to screen

View

Shortcut	Action
`Ctrl+T`	Toggle theme (light/dark)

Other

Shortcut	Action
`Ctrl+/`	Show keyboard shortcuts (help)
`F11`	Toggle fullscreen
`F12`	Open developer tools (debug)

Tips and Tricks

1. Quick Brainstorming

For rapid brainstorming sessions:
1. Load the Brainstorming template
2. Use `Tab` and `Enter` to quickly add nodes
3. Don't worry about styling initially—focus on ideas
4. Customize colors and icons later for organization

2. Organizing Large Mind Maps

For complex mind maps:
- Use collapsible nodes to hide details
- Apply consistent colors to related sections
- Use icons to create visual categories
- Export to PDF for easier viewing of the full structure

3. Presentation Mode

To present your mind map:
1. Collapse all sections you want to reveal progressively
2. Expand them during your presentation for dramatic effect
3. Use `Ctrl+1` to fit the entire map on screen
4. Toggle fullscreen (`F11`) for distraction-free presenting

4. Collaboration Workflow

While real-time collaboration isn't available yet, you can:
1. Export your mind map to JSON
2. Share the file via email or cloud storage
3. Team members can open and edit
4. Use version control (Git) for tracking changes

5. Markdown Integration

If you're a Markdown user:
1. Write your outline in Markdown
2. Import it into MindMapper
3. Enhance with colors, icons, and visual organization
4. Export as PDF for sharing

6. Backup Strategy

Protect your work:
1. Save regularly (`Ctrl+S`)
2. Use "Save As" to create dated backups
3. Store files in a cloud-synced folder (Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.)
4. Export to JSON for archival copies

7. Color Coding System

Develop a consistent color system:
- 🔵 Blue: Tasks or actions
- 🟢 Green: Completed items
- 🟡 Yellow: In progress

- 🔴 Red: Important or urgent
- 🟣 Purple: Ideas or concepts

8. Keyboard-First Workflow

For maximum productivity:
1. Use templates to start quickly (`Ctrl+N`)
2. Create nodes with `Tab` and `Enter`
3. Navigate with arrow keys
4. Save frequently with `Ctrl+S`
5. Never touch the mouse!

Troubleshooting

Mind Map Doesn't Load

- Check that the file is a valid `.mindmap.json` file
- Try opening in a text editor to verify it's valid JSON
- Restore from a backup if the file is corrupted

Performance Issues with Large Maps

- Collapse sections you're not actively working on
- Consider splitting very large maps into multiple files
- Close other applications to free up memory

Styles Not Applying

- Make sure you have a node selected
- Check that you're not in editing mode (press Escape)
- Try refreshing the view with `Ctrl+1`

Can't Delete a Node

- You cannot delete the root node (by design)
- Make sure the node is selected (highlighted)
- Try pressing `Delete` instead of `Backspace`

Getting Help

If you need assistance:

- **Documentation**: Check this guide and other documentation files
- **Keyboard Shortcuts**: Press `Ctrl+/` in the app
- **Issues**: Report bugs on GitHub
- **Community**: Join our community forum for tips and discussions

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Happy Mind Mapping! 🧠✨