

My First Inspiration Project

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to guide your students through their first Inspiration project.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

The techtorial applies to any computer running Inspiration (any version!).

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard IIe in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#).

WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

[Inspiration](#) is a software program that allows users to "build graphic organizers to represent concepts and relationships and use the integrated outlining capability to further organize ideas for reports." Many educators see the program as one of the best for brainstorming, concept mapping, and outlining. With only a few clicks, teachers and students can create detailed representations of what they're thinking.

If you're new to Inspiration, check out the [Interactive Demonstration](#) (click on the link to the left) to see how the program works.

Like any software program, an introduction activity is the best way to learn to use Inspiration. The following techtorial was designed for second graders to use with partners (one reads the instructions while the other completes the activity). You can print the techtorial for your students' use or walk students through the instructions on your own.

STEP ONE: CREATING SYMBOLS

This techtorial is intended to be used by elementary-level students working independently or in pairs.

Provide students with the following directions:

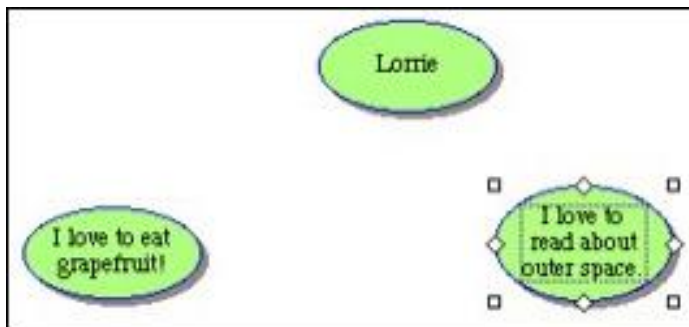
- Double-click the icon below to open Inspiration.



- A new page will open up with a green bubble, called a "symbol."



- Using the keyboard, type your first name. Your name will replace the words "Main Idea" in the green bubble.
- Click to the bottom-left of your name. A new bubble will appear. Type the words "I love to eat _____" and the name of your favorite food in that bubble.
- Click to the bottom-right of your name and type "I love to read about _____" and a description of what you like to read about in the new bubble.
- Your page should look like something like this:



STEP TWO: LINKING THE SYMBOLS

Provide students with the following directions for connecting their symbols:

- Click the bubble with your name in it.

- Click the Link icon. .



- An arrow will appear. Click the bubble that names your favorite food and see that an arrow now connects your name and your favorite food.
- Click the right bubble describing what you like to read about to link that bubble too.
- Uh-oh! Does your arrow *point to* your name instead of to your favorite food or favorite reading topic? If so, click the arrow and click DELETE to erase the arrow. Then, click the bubble with your name in it, click the Link icon, and click the food or book symbol. The first bubble you click is where the starting point of your arrow will be.

Notice that the word "bubble" is used instead of the word "symbol." Using the correct terminology often is less important than using words students easily understand, especially during independent work. Also, although the Create tool would create linked symbols immediately -- saving a step, having students create the symbols and then link them helps them understand why arrows should point from the main idea to the sub ideas.

STEP THREE: SAVING YOUR WORK

The following directions help students save their work as "FirstNameIntro" in a Desktop folder called Student Work. You'll need to create that folder on each student computer or reword the instructions below to indicate where the file should be saved. Be sure students have a consistent place to save files; that improves the chances their work won't be lost.

- Click File and then click Save.



- Do you see your name? Click in the space after your name and type the word "Intro."
- Click the word Desktop.
- Click the words Student Work.
- Click Save
- Click Inspiration then click Quit to exit Inspiration.

You then can then go to each student computer and make a note of who has completed the activity. As a follow-up activity, you might teach students how to change the bubble symbol into a piece of clip art or a photo, or how to make a more detailed diagram and convert it to an outline.

TELL ME MORE!

Where can I find more information?

For more ideas on using Inspiration in the classroom, see [The Concept-Mapping Classroom](#). To see how Inspiration works on handhelds, see [The Tech Team Reviews Inspiration for Palm](#). Finally, the