



# the Sketchnote WORKBOOK

→ ADVANCED techniques FOR TAKING ←  
VISUAL NOTES you CAN USE anywhere



by **MIKE ROHDE**  
author of *The Sketchnote Handbook*

# WHERE IS MY VIDEO?

Thank you for purchasing this digital version of:

## **The Sketchnote Workbook** **Advanced techniques for taking visual notes** **you can use anywhere**

In order to access the video included with this book, you will need to visit [peachpit.com](http://peachpit.com) and follow the steps below:

1. On a Mac or PC, go to [www.peachpit.com/account](http://www.peachpit.com/account) and enter this code into the Digital Product Voucher field located on the right side of the page:

**51FD2A19E54D**

2. If you do not have a Peachpit.com account, you will be prompted to create one.
3. The video will be listed under the Digital Purchases tab on your Account page.
4. Click "Watch Now" to view the streaming video.

If you are unable to locate the video for this title by following the steps above, please email [ask@peachpit.com](mailto:ask@peachpit.com) and supply the code from step one. Our customer service representatives will assist you as soon as possible.

Legal Notice: Peachpit Press makes no warranty or representation, either express or implied, with respect to this software, its quality, performance, merchantability, or fitness for a particular purpose. In no event will Peachpit Press, its distributors, or dealers be liable for direct, indirect, special, incidental or consequential damages arising out of the use or inability to use the software. The exclusion of implied warranties is not permitted in some states. Therefore, the above exclusion may not apply to you. This warranty provides you with specific legal rights. There may be other rights that you may have that vary from state to state.

The software and media files are copyrighted by the authors and Peachpit Press. You have the non-exclusive right to use these programs and files. You may use them on one computer at a time. You may not distribute the URL to third parties or redistribute the files over a network. You may transfer the files onto a single hard disk so long as you can prove ownership of this eBook.

You may not reverse engineer, decompile, or disassemble the software or media files. You may not modify or translate the software or media, or distribute copies of the software or media without the written consent of Peachpit Press.

## PRAISE FOR *THE SKETCHNOTE WORKBOOK*

..—————..

“The practical lessons in *The Sketchnote Workbook* make it easy and fun for anyone to leverage visual note taking to help them remember more, communicate better, and develop ideas more completely.”

— Todd Henry, author of *Die Empty*

“If you want to succeed in capturing and communicating your ideas, you need to read this book. Because it’s not merely a book: It’s a blueprint for a new way of thinking, and it’s fantastically useful.”

— Daniel Coyle, *The New York Times* best-selling author of *The Talent Code* and *The Little Book of Talent*

“Mike has created a resource that will inspire anyone to take their doodling to a new level and begin using sketchnoting in every aspect of their lives. After reading this book, I know my recipe cards and travel journals will never look the same again!”

— C.C. Chapman, author of *Amazing Things Will Happen*

“Mike Rohde wants you to understand a simple idea: Drawing aids thinking. Or, even better, drawing IS thinking. I fully agree with him: Pen and paper amplify our thinking when we use them to record what we see, and to reflect on what it means.

This book, as its predecessor, *The Sketchnote Handbook*, will not just make you a better artist, it’ll make you a better thinker.”

— Alberto Cairo, author of *The Functional Art*

“I present information as narrated visuals so Mike’s approach makes a lot of sense to me. Visuals are key to understanding complexity, and the combination of images and text as notes is always more effective than notes alone.

Sometimes they are more effective than the original presentation.”

— Horace Dediu, founder of Asymco

“We humans are visual! So if you want to build your creativity and communication skills in order to facilitate the most powerful business meetings and give genius presentations, then *The Sketchnote Workbook* is one of the most fun and effective ways I know to do it. ”

— Mark Bowden, president of TRUTHPLANE® Communication Training and author of *Winning Body Language*

“Learning to capture the world in pictures and words changed my life, but it took me years of trial and error. How I wish I’d had Mike Rohde’s generous books as guides!”

— Austin Kleon, author of *The New York Times* best-seller *Steal Like an Artist*

*This page intentionally left blank*



# the Sketchnote WORKBOOK

→ ADVANCED *techniques* FOR TAKING ←  
VISUAL NOTES YOU CAN USE anywhere



by MIKE RORDE  
author of *The Sketchnote Handbook*

# THE SKETCHNOTE WORKBOOK

*Advanced techniques for taking visual notes you can use anywhere*

Mike Rohde

Peachpit Press

Find us on the Web at [www.peachpit.com](http://www.peachpit.com)

To report errors, please send a note to [errata@peachpit.com](mailto:errata@peachpit.com)

Peachpit Press is a division of Pearson Education.

Copyright © 2015 by Michael D. Rohde

**Acquisitions Editor:** Nikki Echler McDonald

**Development Editor:** Jan Seymour

**Production Editor:** Tracey Croom

**Proofreader:** Liz Welch

**Indexer:** James Minkin

**Cover Design and Illustrations:** Mike Rohde

**Interior Design and Illustrations:** Mike Rohde

**Video Producer:** Brian Artka

**Media Producer:** Eric Geoffroy



## NOTICE OF RIGHTS

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. For information on getting permission for reprints and excerpts, contact [permissions@peachpit.com](mailto:permissions@peachpit.com).

## NOTICE OF LIABILITY

The information in this book is distributed on an "As Is" basis without warranty. While every precaution has been taken in the preparation of the book, neither the author nor Peachpit shall have any liability to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the instructions contained in this book or by the computer software and hardware products described in it.

## TRADEMARKS

Many of the designations used by manufacturers and sellers to distinguish their products are claimed as trademarks. Where those designations appear in this book, and Peachpit was aware of a trademark claim, the designations appear as requested by the owner of the trademark. All other product names and services identified throughout this book are used in editorial fashion only and for the benefit of such companies with no intention of infringement of the trademark. TED talks referenced in sketchnotes throughout this book are copyright TED Conferences, LLC. No such use, or the use of any trade name, is intended to convey endorsement or other affiliation with this book.

ISBN 13: 978-0-133-83171-9

ISBN 10: 0-133-83171-X

9 7 8 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound in the United States of America

*This book is dedicated to Gail, Nathan, Linnea, Landon,  
Mom, Dad, and all of my dear friends and community.  
I couldn't have created this book without your support.*

*We did it!*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**THE SKETCHNOTE WORKBOOK WAS GOING GREAT**, until it turned upside-down with a family medical emergency halfway through its creation. Without a doubt, the supportive network and amazing editors and publisher kept this book you're reading alive. My deepest thanks go to family, friends, colleagues, and the sketchnote community for supporting us when everything seemed against us.

**GAIL**, you're the reason I do the work I do. We've been through some painful, difficult days in this season of our lives, but we're hanging in there. Thanks for your consistent, amazing support of what I love to do. I love you!

**NATHAN, LINNEA, AND LANDON**, thanks for your support as I worked on a second book project. My wish for you is that the work I'm doing makes you very proud and that you love telling people your daddy wrote some pretty cool books.

**NIKKI MCDONALD**, thanks for being my biggest fan and sticking with me, believing in me, and working so hard to make this second book come to life. In spite of all the challenges we've faced together, you've been steady. I'm so proud of having worked with you to create two amazing books that are like nothing else.

**JAN SEYMOUR**, I've had a blast having you as my editor. You've embraced my book from the start and together we've made this book even better than *The Sketchnote Handbook*. Thanks for cheering me on when things seemed darkest.

**PEACHPIT**, your team was my secret weapon, once again. Thank you, Liz Welch for your eagle eye, James Minkin for another perfect index, Tracey Croom for making this a superb-looking book, and Eric Geoffroy for providing expert knowledge to create another fantastic video.

**DAVID FUGATE**, I appreciate your guidance as my agent through another book project. Thanks for answering every crazy question I come up with.

**BRIAN ARTKA**, thanks for telling my story with video and for being a great friend. You are always willing to push me to do my best and achieve excellence. I wouldn't want to tell a story through video with anyone else.

**DELVE WITHRINGTON**, years ago we created The Sketchnote Typeface and now I have a second book set in it. Thanks for making book production so much easier for me and for making foreign translations much more likely.

**GABE WOLLENBURG**, thanks for your sense of humor and your immediate willingness to create another fabulous screenplay for my video. You rock!

**STEPHEN MORK**, thanks for creating a fun, encouraging, and danceable soundtrack. Your music adds a perfect positive vibe to the video.

**ERIC RESCH, JOE SORGE, MARK FAIRBANKS, CYNTHIA THOMAS, JON MUELLER, TOM & KATE GOMOLL, AND CYNTHIA LEVAN**, thanks for letting us use your spaces in the *Workbook* video to show viewers that Milwaukee is a cool place to be.

**FEATURED SKETCHNOTERS:** Don Pollitt, Jackie Pomeroy-Tso, Julie Stitt, Mauro Toselli, Chris Spalton, Sam “Pub” Smith, and Doug Neill, thanks for sharing your sketchnoting journeys and experiences—not to mention your work.

**FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES**, thanks for your reviews and feedback about the book and video as I created it. This is a better book because of your help.

**TO THE SKETCHNOTING COMMUNITY**, this book is for you. Thanks for your strong support and encouragement along with sketchnote contributions as I labored to create this book. I can’t wait to see how you’ll use and improve these new ideas!



*This page intentionally left blank*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MIKE ROHDE has a passion for simple and usable design solutions. That passion, along with his lifelong habit of recording concepts and observations through sketching and doodling, inspired him to develop sketchnotes—a practical art that translates simple and complex ideas into easily recalled bits of information.



Professionally, Mike focuses on user interface, user experience, visual design, and icon design for mobile and web applications at *Gomoll Research + Design* in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Mike's popular first book, *The Sketchnote Handbook*, convinces people around the world to become sketchnoters every day. Translated into German, Russian, Chinese, and Czech, it guides readers in using their natural visual capabilities to create sketchnotes for better understanding, and to have fun taking notes.

He enjoys speaking publicly about his passion for sketchnoting, sketching, and visual thinking skills at venues across the United States.

In his illustration practice, Mike uses his unique drawing style to amplify and clarify ideas. His work is featured in *REWORK* and *REMOTE*, two best-selling books by Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson; *The \$100 Startup*, a best-selling book by Chris Guillebeau; and *The Little Book of Talent* by Daniel Coyle.

Community and sharing are important cornerstones of Mike's philosophy, as evidenced by the creation of *The Sketchnote Army*, a website dedicated to finding and showcasing sketchnotes and sketchnoters from around the world.

Mike has also shared his thinking, design process, and samples of his design and illustration work at his personal website, [rohdesign.com](http://rohdesign.com), since 2003.

Mike lives with his wife, Gail, and children, Nathan, Linnea, and Landon, just outside of Milwaukee. He's an avid Green Bay Packers fan.

Learn more about Mike at [rohdesign.com](http://rohdesign.com).

# CONTENTS



## Chapter 1



### SKETCHNOTING QUICKSTART OVERVIEW 2

What sketchnotes are, the elements that make them up, and the techniques and approaches used to capture and map ideas with words and images.

## Chapter 2



### SKETCHNOTE IDEA GENERATION 14

Sketchnoting is a great tool for capturing ideas, on your own or while working with a team. During the idea generation process, sketchnoting helps you amplify ideas and gives you the freedom to explore.



## Chapter 3



### SKETCHNOTE IDEA MAPPING 38

Sketchnotes don't have to be the end result of visual thinking. You can use sketchnoting as a valuable step in the middle of a project to analyze and better understand information.



## Chapter 4



### SKETCHNOTE PLANNING 66

Sketchnotes are well suited for planning. Use them to plan ahead visually for projects like simple task lists, family vacations, work assignments, and more.



## Chapter 5



### SKETCHNOTE DOCUMENTATION 92

Sketchnoting is an effective way to convert information into concise visual documents that communicate processes and ideas.





## Chapter 6



### **SKETCHNOTING TRAVEL EXPERIENCES 112**

Sketchnotes are a fun way to capture and document memorable travel experiences with drawings, type, text, and other elements.

## Chapter 7



### **SKETCHNOTING FOOD EXPERIENCES 132**

Capture delicious meals with sketchnotes using drawings, type, and text. Create visual records of your fantastic food experiences to enjoy and share.

## Chapter 8



### **SKETCHNOTING MOVIES, TV, & MEDIA 144**

Sketchnotes are a useful way to process, understand, and capture the meaning in movies, TV shows, and other kinds of media.

## Chapter 9



### **ADVANCED SKETCHNOTING TIPS & TECHNIQUES 168**

I've gathered a collection of advanced tips & techniques to boost your sketchnoting skills to the next level.



Let's SKETCHNOTE!



# INTRODUCTION

**A YEAR AND A HALF AGO, *THE SKETCHNOTE HANDBOOK* WAS RELEASED INTO THE WORLD.** Frankly, I was nervous about the launch. I had no idea how my first book would be received.

Boy, was I wrong to worry! *The Sketchnote Handbook* launched to immediate excitement from its readers. I received a constant stream of positive social media mentions, encouraging email messages, and more positive book reviews than I would have imagined. It was an awesome experience.

Invitations to appear on podcasts came in while reviews were posted on blogs and websites. Within a few months, Peachpit Press had to print more copies of the *Handbook* video edition due to brisk sales.

German and Russian publishers licensed and printed *Handbook* translations, which became hits in those countries, while Czech and Chinese publishers licensed the book for their own native versions of the *Handbook*.

I spoke on sketchnoting in Portland, Austin, San Antonio, and Chicago, selling out of the books I'd brought with me. I was stoked when Moleskine reached out to create a limited-edition custom sketchbook to give away at SXSW in Austin.

All I could think was, "Wow, this book is a hit!" And I still receive positive feedback from people all over the world.

Why such positivity? Business owners, consultants, designers, developers, writers, doctors, teachers, students, and parents all tell me how my *Sketchnote Handbook* has changed their mindset. For many, the book has encouraged them to more deeply engage in and understand the ideas they're seeing and hearing.

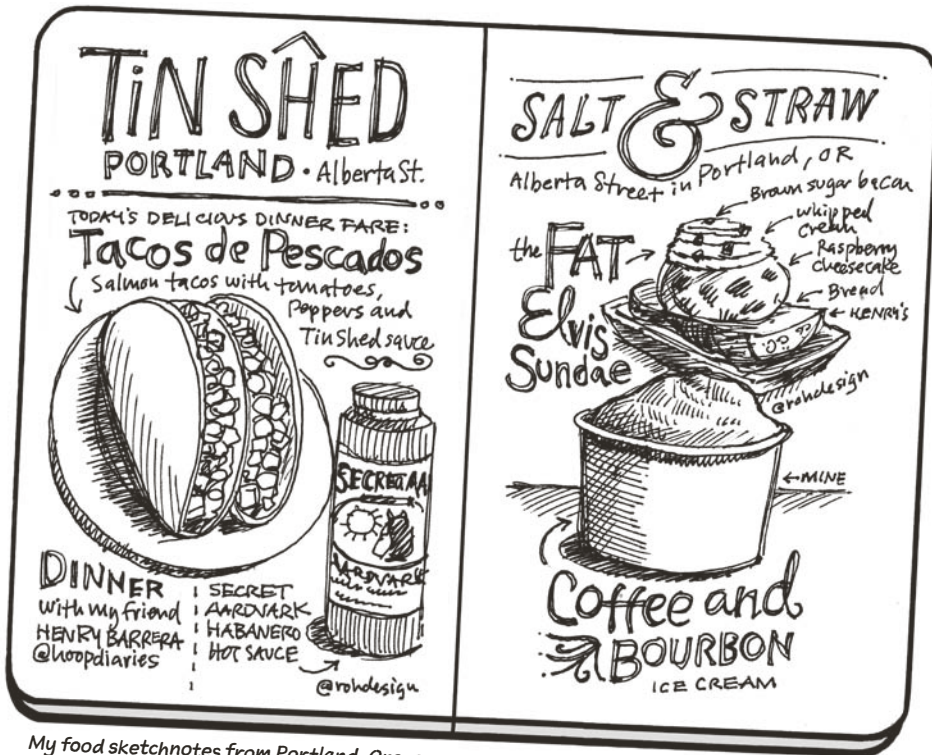
People tell me that sketchnoting has given them the freedom and flexibility to play with ideas, enabling them to create meaningful visual documents that help them better understand and remember ideas and experiences.

The constant flow of positive feedback, blended with my desire to share more ways to apply sketchnotes, inspired me to write *The Sketchnote Workbook*.

## WHAT IS THE SKETCHNOTE WORKBOOK?

Capturing meeting notes or sessions at conferences is a great way for readers to immediately apply sketchnoting techniques and see great value in the approach. The hundreds of sketchnotes I've seen since the release of the *Handbook* verify it. But there are still many more ways sketchnotes can be used that I want to share.

As a veteran designer, I use sketchnotes for idea generation and idea mapping daily. For years I've created travel and food sketchnotes that transport me back to memorable experiences.



My food sketchnotes from Portland, Oregon

But it's not just me. Friends in the sketchnoting community constantly share how they use sketchnotes to document processes, plan projects, and capture ideas in books, movies, TV shows, and sporting events.

I've collected the techniques I've learned from fellow sketchnoters in the community, waiting for the right time and place to share them. You'll find this workbook full of new sketchnoting ideas, plenty of worksheets, and a range of challenges designed to rapidly improve your sketchnoting skills.

My hope is that by working through this book, you'll be inspired to try new sketchnoting ideas. I'd love to see you adopt advanced drawing techniques to tackle the tougher sketchnoting challenges you've been avoiding—until now.

**TIP** BUY A GOOD QUALITY SKETCHBOOK AND PEN

You can capture sketchnotes with any paper and pen. However, by choosing a beautiful sketchbook and a pen you love to use, you're making a commitment to capture your travels in style and can turn sketchnoting your travels into a treasured luxury gift to yourself.

One of my favorite items is a handmade leather sketchbook I've used to sketchnote trips to Washington, D.C. and Portland. I love how it feels to fill the pages. My Retro 51 Tornado Stealth rollerball pen is a joy to write and draw with. My green travel book is already a treasured family heirloom.

Ugmonk green leather travel sketchbook  
Retro 51 Tornado Stealth rollerball pen

**PRACTICAL USES**

Here are some ways to use sketchnotes to capture travel experiences:

**★ PERSONAL TRAVEL SKETCHNOTES**

For personal travel, sketchnote the places, sights, food, highlights, and stories you want to remember from a personal or family vacation. Share your final sketchnotes or use them to create a bound picture book combined with trip photos.

Makayla Lewis captured travel sketchnotes on a trip to Brighton, England.

Ben Norris recorded his travel experiences on a trip to Washington, D.C.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

I've created this book and video to be enjoyed in one go, or used as a reference you can jump around in. If an idea grabs you, try it out! Experiment until it fits your way of working.

The ideas in this book are here for you to iterate on and improve. Worksheets and challenges in the book aren't rigid or designed to have just one correct answer. Rather, this book and its exercises should be seen as experiments and not assignments. Have fun playing and exploring!

## JOIN THE COMMUNITY

As you explore ideas in this book, share your work with the sketchnoting community. We're welcoming and encouraging to everyone. Start at *The Sketchnote Handbook* Flickr group, [flickr.com/groups/thesketchnotehandbook](https://www.flickr.com/groups/thesketchnotehandbook) and then stop by *The Sketchnote Army*, [SketchnoteArmy.com](http://SketchnoteArmy.com).

You'll see the work of many others that will inspire and challenge you. I look forward to you joining the discussion!

## REACH OUT

Please reach out and say hello. Check out my sketchnotes, read my writing, and sign up for my free newsletter at [rohdesign.com](http://rohdesign.com). I'm a very active Twitter user, so reach out at [twitter.com/rohdesign](https://twitter.com/rohdesign).

I look forward to hearing how you apply ideas in the *Workbook* and seeing what new ideas you come up with for using sketchnotes in your own life.

***ALL RIGHT, ENOUGH TALK—IT'S TIME FOR ACTION.***

***GRAB A NOTEBOOK AND A PEN.***

***LET'S SKETCHNOTE!***

ROCK & ROLL!



## SECTION 1: THE BASICS



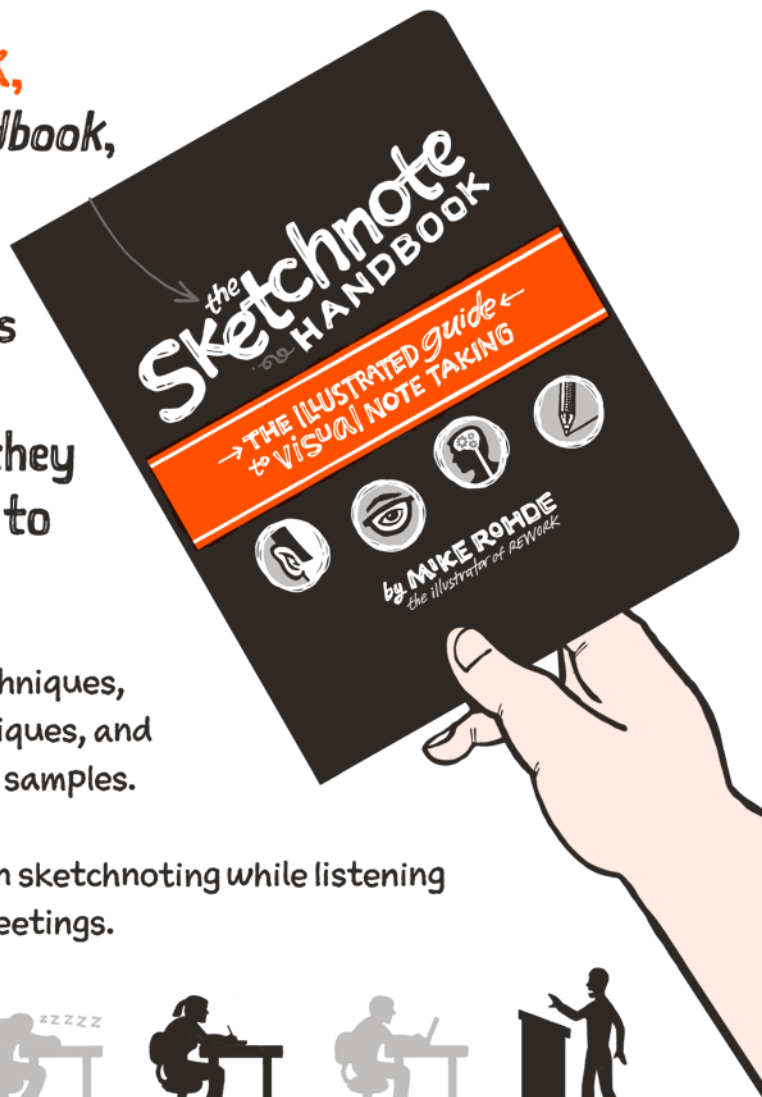
# Chapter 1

# SKETCHNOTING QUICKSTART *Overview*

Let's talk about what sketchnotes are,  
the elements that make them up,  
and the techniques and approaches used to  
capture and map ideas with words and images.



**IN MY FIRST BOOK,**  
*The Sketchnote Handbook,*  
I shared the idea of  
sketchnotes by  
providing a beginner's  
guide to the process:  
*what they are, how they*  
*are created, and why to*  
*create them.*



**I COVERED** listening techniques,  
drawing and lettering techniques, and  
featured lots of sketchnote samples.

Most of the emphasis was on sketchnoting while listening  
to lectures and attending meetings.



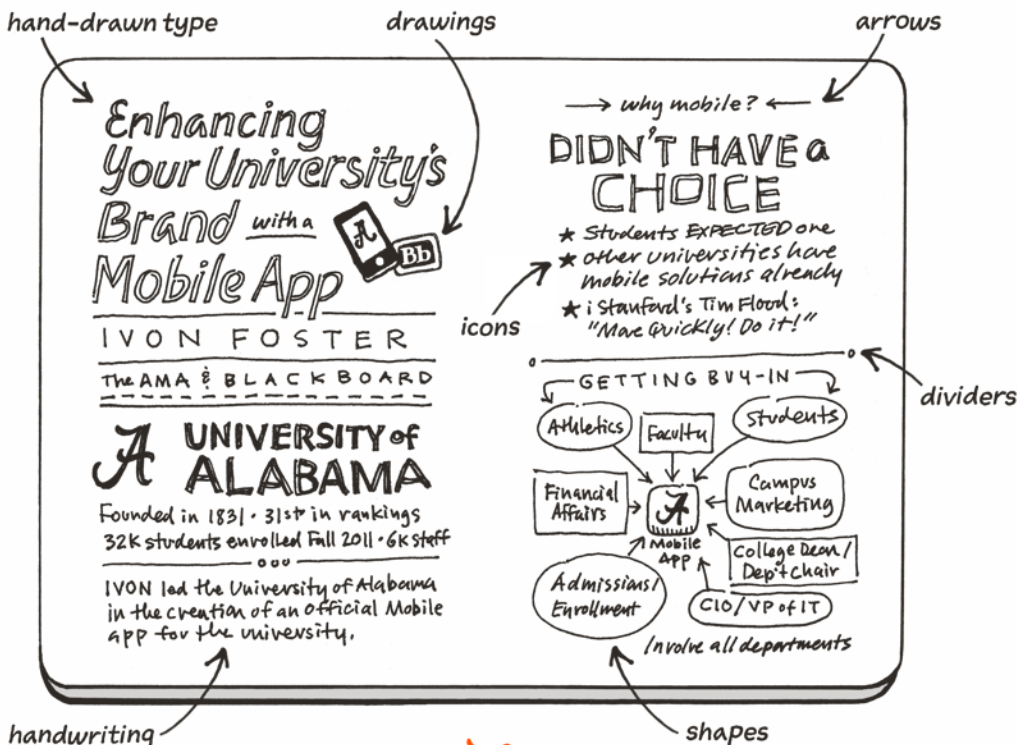
**IN THIS CHAPTER, WE'LL REVIEW THE BASICS  
OF SKETCHNOTING. THIS WAY WE CAN BEGIN  
ON AN EVEN PLAYING FIELD.**

If you've read *The Sketchnote Handbook*, you may jump ahead to  
Chapter 2. Need *The Sketchnote Handbook*? Visit my site for details:

[sketchnotehandbook.com](http://sketchnotehandbook.com)

# What <sup>ARE</sup> Sketchnotes?

**SKETCHNOTES** are rich visual notes created from a mix of handwriting, drawings, hand-drawn typography, shapes, and visual elements like arrows, boxes, and lines.



## they're **NOTES PLUS!**

I call sketchnotes Notes Plus because they're like the notes you already take, with visual elements added to amplify ideas.

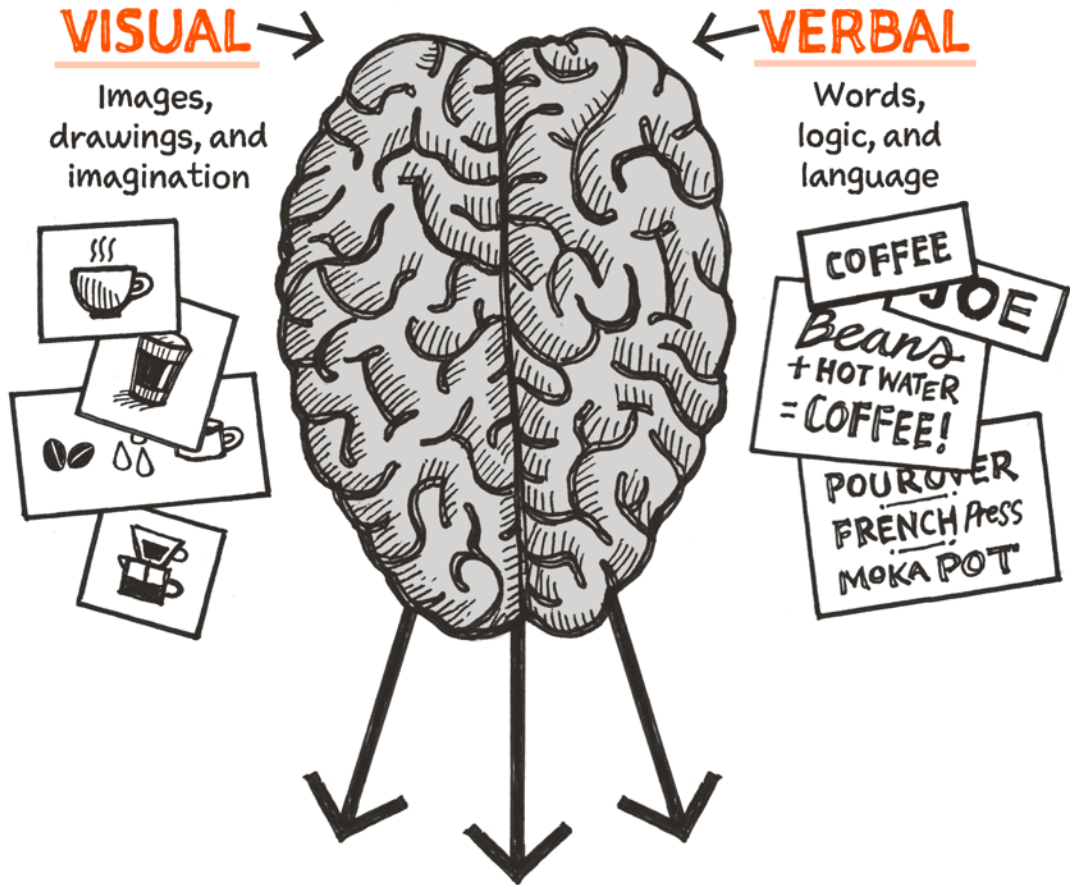


**SKETCHNOTES EMPHASIZE CAPTURING BIG IDEAS IN THE**

*Moment.*

# WHY SKETCHNOTE?

Because it engages your whole mind.



When your WHOLE BRAIN is engaged,  
you create **VISUAL MAPS** of what  
YOU HEAR, SEE, AND THINK.