

KK12 — Ideation techniques and tools for generating design ideas

Analysis & Design · Comprehensive exam study guide

STUDY DESIGN — YOU MUST KNOW

- mood boards
- brainstorming
- mind maps
- sketches
- annotations

Ideation is generating design ideas before formal design. Know each technique and what it produces — questions often ask you to choose a technique for a stage.

Techniques

Technique	What it is / produces
Mood board	A collage of images, colours and styles to set the visual feel.
Brainstorming	Rapidly generating many ideas without early judgement.
Mind map	A diagram branching from a central idea to show related concepts.
Sketch	A quick freehand drawing of a possible interface/idea.
Annotation	Notes added to a sketch/idea explaining or justifying features.

Key definitions to memorise

Ideation	The process of generating and developing design ideas.
Mood board	A collage of visual references (colours, images, styles) used to establish a design's look and feel.
Annotation	Explanatory notes added to a sketch or design idea.

Exam technique

EXAM TIP

- Match technique to purpose: visual feel → mood board; many ideas → brainstorm; organise ideas → mind map; show a layout → sketch + annotations.
- Annotations add reasoning to sketches — useful for justifying choices.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Confusing a mood board (look & feel) with a mock-up (a specific interface design tool).
- Calling a mind map and a brainstorm the same — a mind map organises ideas visually.

Quick revision checklist

- I can describe the five ideation techniques.
- I can recommend a technique for a given purpose.

Exam practice — questions & model answers

Q1. Describe the purpose of a mood board in ideation.

Describe · 2 marks

Model answer

- It collects images, colours and styles in one place (1)
- to establish the intended look and feel of the solution early in design (1).

Q2. A team has the overall idea but wants to quickly visualise several screen layouts. Recommend an ideation technique and justify it.

Recommend/Justify · 2 marks

Model answer

- Sketches (with annotations) (1),
- because quick freehand drawings let them explore and compare layout options rapidly before formal design (1).