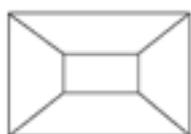# Placemat

This activity gives all students the opportunity to work individually, to share ideas and learn from each other in a **cooperative** small-group discussion

- Divide students into small groups of 4, around a sheet of A3.
- Students individually write down answers to a preplanned question in their own section on the paper (alternatively students could consider 4 different aspects of one question).
- Students then take turns to share ideas in discovering common elements which can be written in the centre of the chart.
- Students engage in a discussion with all group members to reach consensus on a group answer.
- A ranking ladder is a graphic organiser with 3 or 4 rungs. Students place the most important point agreed by the group on the top rung, the second on the next rung and so on.
- The group rank their answers in the centre of the placemat.
- Students should be encouraged to actively listen and take notes as each group's placemat is presented.
- For further sharing, the placemats could be hung on the classroom wall or students could take photos of them to support homework and revision.

Tips

- Divide a blank sheet of paper into sections equal to the number of students in the group. While 4 is ideal, 3 or 5 would also work.
- Assign group roles e.g. timekeeper, reporter, etc. Be specific with your time.
- Highlight that in the first part of a Placemat students work individually.
- Move around each group to ensure they are on task.

Key Skills

- Managing information and thinking
- Managing myself
- Communicating
- Working with others
- Being literate
- Being creative

Resources

- Placemat template
- Markers
- Blu tack

Room Layout

Arrange students in **groups of 4**

Assessment

Assess for understanding by listening to student responses

Supporting Homework

The group responses could be saved and posted on a digital platform to support homework

Further Information
Further reading and support on implementing this strategy is available on **www.jct.ie**

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