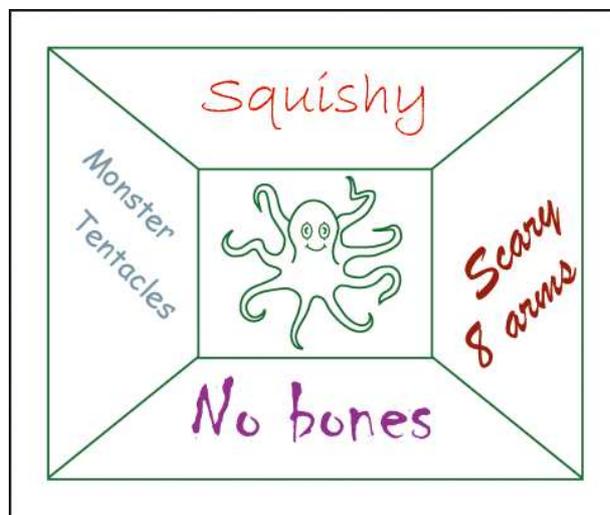


## Place Mat

### Overview

This cooperative learning strategy allows students to think about, record (usually around the outside area of a large piece of paper), and then share their ideas. Afterwards, they may compare what each group member has written, and compile the common items in the centre of the paper.



### Steps

1. Form groups of up to four members.
2. Give each group a piece of chart paper and each student a pen or pencil.
3. Divide the paper into parts, based on the number of members in the group, and leave a central square or circle.
4. Have students write their ideas in the designated spaces, and after sharing their ideas, the group can write common ideas in the centre of the paper.

### Hints and Management Ideas

- *Inform students* that they should be prepared to share their responses.
- *Encourage* independent thinking as well as group sharing.
- *Monitor the discussions.* It is important to listen to some of the discussions so that common confusions can be addressed with the whole group.

## Place Mat (continued)

### Benefits of Place Mat

- When students have appropriate “think time”, the quality of their responses improves.
- Students are actively engaged in the thinking, and independent thinking is encouraged.
- More of the critical thinking is retained from a lesson in which students have had an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the topic.
- Many students find it safer or easier to enter into a discussion with a smaller group.
- It is important for students to learn how to build on the ideas of others, and be able, as a group, to combine common thoughts and write them down.

For more detailed information, refer to Bennett, B. and Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: The Artful Science of Instructional Integration*. Toronto, Ontario: Bookation Inc.