



## Magic Number Squares – practising the Ground Rules

‘**Magic Number Squares – practicing the Ground Rules**’ supports teachers in providing students with an opportunity to practice using the ground rules for talk.

The content of this resource is adopted, with permission, from the Thinking Together resources (<http://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk/>).

Please acknowledge the source of this information in all subsequent use.



Adapted from the [Thinking Together](#) resources

### **WHAT TEACHERS SAY**

It is worth spending a few minutes going through the ground rules. It is a good idea to have these on display where the children can see them. It helps if you ask children to explain what the rules mean and why each one is important.

The talk cards make a big difference. They act as prompts and give children phrases which help them to use the ground rules. One group suggested sticking them round the edge of the computer screen, so that they could be seen easily.

### **AIMS**

The aim of this lesson is to give the children an opportunity to practise using the ground rules for talk. The rules that the class has agreed on should be revised, and then displayed during the lesson. Any extra ground rules for using the computer that have been agreed should also be recalled and displayed.

### **RESOURCES**

*Talk cards – one set cut up for each group.*

*The ground rules for talk need to be displayed.*

### **WHOLE CLASS 1**

Begin by asking the children to recall their ground rules for talk (see 'What teachers say' about this lesson above).

Now explain the objectives of the lesson, emphasising that this lesson is to give the children a chance to begin to use their ground rules for talk to think together about a maths puzzle.

Introduce/revise Magic Squares.

You could use the Magic Square below to do this.

11	3	10
7	8	9
6	13	5

Discuss the sum of each row, column and diagonal. They all equal 24. This is the magic number. Can they see a relationship between the centre number and the magic number?

Now show the following incomplete Magic Square:

8		
	5	7
		2

Ask the children to discuss a strategy to solve this Magic Square. Remind them to give reasons for their suggestions. When they have had a chance to share their ideas, ask for feedback, again asking for reasons.

Now demonstrate how to choose numbers in the file Magic Square 1 to the class. This one uses the magic number 12.

### **GROUP WORK**

Explain that the objective of the group work is to talk together in order to agree a strategy to use to solve the magic square. Give each group a set of talk cards to use to help them to stick to the ground rules. They should use the cards in the order given. Once they have a solution they should add their names and print it out.

### **PLENARY**

Ask each group to give an example of a problem and explain their strategy for solving the problem.

Identify with the pupils the types of strategies used and how they organised their group. How did they arrive at a solution?

Ask the groups how they used the ground rules for talk. Do they think the aim of the lesson was achieved?

### **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

One general solution for Magic Squares is for any given total  $3n$  (plus rotations and reflections of this). A key strategy is to identify the three sequential numbers that form one diagonal – that is, the centre number is the total of the square divided by 3.

**What do you think?**

**Why do you think that?**

**Talk card 1**

---

**I agree with  
because ...**

**I disagree with  
because ...**

**Talk card 2**

---

**Any more ideas  
to share?**

**Do we all agree?  
(Or shall we talk more?)**

**Talk card 3**

---





This work is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 License** (see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

You are free to share, copy, and distribute this document, as long as you leave this acknowledgement in place, and do not make commercial profit. You are also free to adapt and use part of this resource, as long as you do not make commercial profit, and acknowledge the authors.

The **Digitalised Dialogues Across the Curriculum (DiDiAC)** project is funded by The Research Council of Norway ([FINNUT/Project No: 254761](#)).

---