



MONTESSORI INSPIRED LIFESTYLE®

Activity Ideas for Veterans & History Enthusiasts

Person-centered care means that activities incorporate an individual's preferences and interests and take into consideration their skills and abilities. Here is an activity idea that may be of interest to veterans of the Armed Forces or anyone with an interest in History or Geography.

Category Sorting

Category Sorting is an engaging activity that can be done one-on-one or as a group. In these activities, participants can practice reading skills, gross motor skills, evoke personal memories, and enjoy social interaction and discussion.



Materials:

- Large foam board or magnetic board at least 24" x 24"
- Ten 8.5" x 3" cardstock labels printed from computer or written in thick marker.
 - Two of these will have category names (for example, NORTH/UNION and SOUTH/CONFEDERATE)
 - The rest will have names of items to be sorted (i.e. Ohio, Pennsylvania, Georgia, etc). Create at least 4 for each category.

Make sure the words are large, bold, and legible. If using a computer, choose large (40-48 pt), bold, sans serif font, such as Helvetica or Ariel.

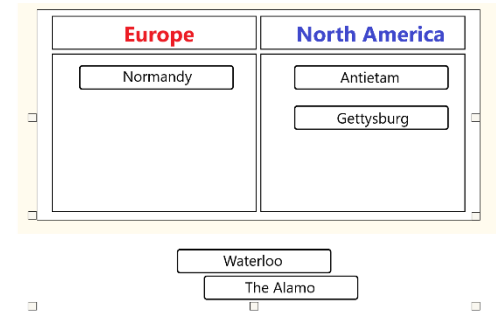
- Adhesive backed magnetic or Velcro® strips cut into pieces (one per label), depending on the type of board used.

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Activity Ideas for Veterans – Category Sorting (continued)

Set up:

- 1) Cut labels from printed sheets if needed, and laminate so they can be cleaned/sanitized after use.
- 2) Apply magnetic or Velcro pieces to the backs of the label cards. If using Velcro, attach felt pieces to the large board.
- 3) Place Category Labels next to each other at the top of the board.
- 4) Place Item Labels in a pile next to the board.



Instructions:

1. Demonstrate the activity by picking up one Item Label and reading it aloud. Say the name of the category it belongs in and place the item under the appropriate category heading.
2. Choose a second card and ask the participant to read it aloud.
3. Ask the participant which category it belong in (i.e. *“Which side was this state on during the Civil War, North or South?”*)
4. Hand the card to the participant and ask them to place the state label under the category label they choose.
5. Ask the participant to continue selecting cards, reading them, and placing them under category headings.

Here are some other categories to try sorting:

- ▶ **North and South States in the American Civil War** (shown in example above), **Battles by North/South Victory, or Union/Confederate Generals**)
- ▶ **Battles and Wars**, such as *American Revolutionary War* (Capture of Fort Ticonderoga, The Battle of Bunker Hill) and *American Civil War* (Battle of Gettysburg, Battle of Antietam)
- ▶ **Base and Branch of Service**, such as *Army* (Fort Bragg, Fort Hood) and *Navy* (Norfolk, Pearl Harbor).
- ▶ **Allies and Axis Countries from WWII**
- ▶ **Countries in Europe and Asia**
- ▶ **Cities in Europe and North America**

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Activity Ideas for Veterans – Category Sorting (continued)

Tips and Extensions:

- ❖ Invite participants to do as much as possible using their strengths and abilities. Allow them to physically hold the card and place it in the column they choose, or let them to point to the column where they would place the item. If the participant cannot do every step of the activity, have them do only one step at a time.
- ❖ Allow the participant to share any memories associated with the item on the card. For example, when sorting geographic locations, ask if they have ever visited that place and what they remember about it. Encourage discussion while being mindful of any trauma or anxiety that may be associated with the topic.
- ❖ Invite participants to help create activity materials. This can be the creation of the physical cards, or they can help by listing items in categories for a future sorting activity.
- ❖ Keep the environment free from distractions. Only present one item at a time. If necessary, remove each item after it has been sorted.
- ❖ To simplify, use pictures instead of labels. For example, the Civil War State Sort may use pictures of Union or Confederate soldiers or flags instead of text.

Make it a group activity!

- Ask for a volunteer to read each label, and a volunteer to place it on the board.
- Invite group members to vote. Print category labels in two different colors (i.e. red and blue). Give each person a paddle with those colors (red on one side and blue on the other, or one paddle of each color), which they can hold up to vote.
- The most exciting activities are ones where there is not unanimous agreement. Include items that don't clearly fit into either category and start a discussion.

*Montessori principles make activities even more engaging.
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