

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

### Category Sorts

A category sort activity is designed to entice and engage elders with familiar items from daily life. They can be used effectively with elders at all stages of dementia. In their simplest form, objects can be manipulated and sorted or matched. At a more challenging level, labels can be included to incorporate the use of familiar vocabulary.

#### Purpose:

- Enjoyment
- Facilitate functional verbal expression
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Repetition to improve skills
- Sensory stimulation

#### Materials/Templates Needed:

- Tray
- Placemat in color that contrasts the table surface
- A large bowl or basket containing items to be sorted (nuts and bolts, coins, buttons, etc.)
- Two laminated cards (in two different colors) with the names of the categories
- Labels for each of the objects (optional)



#### Participating in the Activity:

*First demonstrate the steps, then invite the person to participate in and complete the activity*

- Carry the tray to a table.
- Roll out the placemat.
- Place the two category labels at the top of the placemat in two columns.

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- Place the large bowl of objects directly in front of you.
- Select an object from the bowl. Based on its attributes, place it in the appropriate column.
- Continue until all the objects are sorted.
- (Optional) Use word labels to label the items after they have been sorted into categories.
- When finished, place all of the objects back in the bowl and all of the materials back on the tray.
- Return the tray to the shelf.

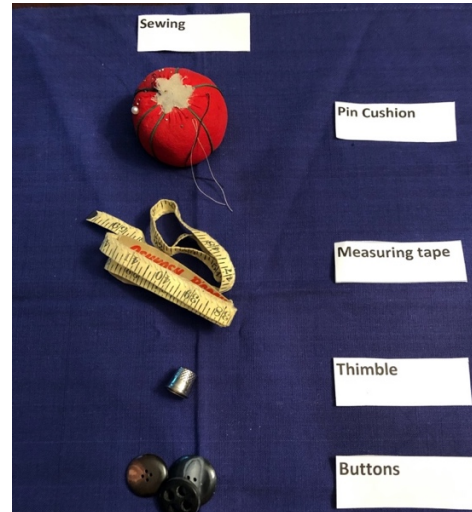
### Possible Modifications:



### *Modifications to Simplify:*

- Use fewer items
- Use starkly contrasting categories
- Use color coded containers that match the color of the objects being sorted
- Use paint or colored dot stickers on the bottom of each object to correspond with the color of the category labels

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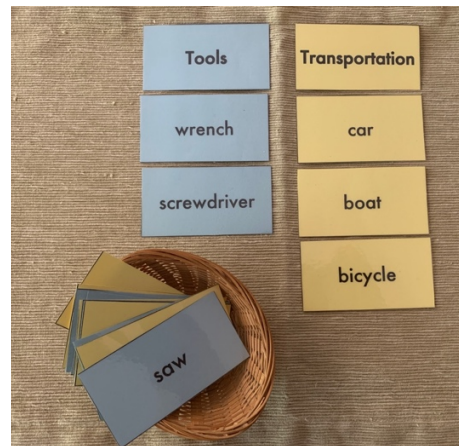


### To Make More Complex:

- Add items to the categories
- Use categories with subtler differences
- Sort three categories instead of two
- Encourage the person to say the name of the object as the label is placed (to practice reading and expressive language skills)

### Picture and Word Cards:

Photos can be used instead of objects. Photos can include the labels or the labels can be made separately for matching. Color sticker dots on the backs of the cards can be used for checking to see if they are sorted correctly.



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Words alone can be used to sort into categories. If white paper is used, color sticker dots should be put on the backs of the cards. To simplify the activity, each category can be printed on its own color paper for easier differentiation.

### **Possible Extensions:**

- Describe or demonstrate use of each item
- Reminisce with the elder about one of the objects after the activity is complete
- Introduce a related project (such as a cooking project that makes use of the tools that were sorted)

### **Additional Category Sort Ideas:**

#### *Object Sort:*

Rings and Bracelets  
Knives and Forks  
Shells and Rocks  
Rough and Smooth  
Pencils and Pens  
Leaves and Petals  
Nuts and Bolts  
Coins  
Buttons

#### *Picture/Word Sort:*

Cats and Dogs  
Fruits and Vegetables  
Meat and Dairy  
Baking Tools and Sewing Tools  
Sweet and Salty  
Summer and Winter  
Living and Non-Living  
Flowers and Trees  
Tools and Transportation

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*Example: Word labels (not color coded)*

<b>Kitchen Tools</b>	<b>Sewing Tools</b>
Measuring spoons	Pin cushion
Can opener	Measuring tape
Measuring cup	Spool of thread
Wooden spoon	Thimble
Egg slicer	Buttons

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