

CDEM5 Developing Vocabulary Handout 3.5 Experiencing Concept Sorts

Closed Word Sorts: Word sorts are an activity where students can categorize words according to context, features (affixes, spelling, roots), or parts of speech. In closed word sorts, the categories are provided for students. Sometimes a word bank is provided, or students can retrieve words from the text.

Directions: Read the brief introduction to Marco Polo below. Sort the words that describe each of the given categories. Think about why the words belongs in that category. **Words may be used more than once** and can be considered correct with a valid explanation.

Marco Polo and His Travels One of the most well-known Europeans to travel the Silk Road, a 7,000-mile trade route that went from Europe to Mongolia (now China), was Marco Polo (1245-1324). Marco was a merchant, explorer, and writer who recorded his travels in the book *The Travels of Marco Polo*, which describes his travels along the Silk Road. Polo grew up in a family where both his father Niccoló and uncle Maffeo were merchants. Even before Marco was born, his brothers had travelled extensively, setting up trading posts in many parts of the Mongolian Empire. Later, the Polo brothers embarked on a new journey, and this time they brought young Marco with them over the Silk Road to the Mongol Empire. Marco became a fine navigator, exploring additional routes that could be taken across many regions.

Kublai Khan, King of the Mongol Empire, was happy to see the foreigners and greeted them with great hospitality. He wanted to know a lot about Europe. Kublai Khan took a liking to the young Marco Polo and appointed him to high posts in his administration. Kahn insisted that the Polos remain with him. He was persistent and reluctant to let them go. Eventually, when the Polos had been with the Khan for 17 years, they got his permission to leave and head back to Europe. They arrived back to Venice in the winter of 1295, after being away for 24 years, and loaded with many exotic treasures from the Far East which included, gold, silk, spices, fine porcelain and even golden tablet given to the Polos by Kublai Khan.

Word Bank: merchant, spices, navigator, exotic, powerful, porcelain, silk, persistent, explorer

Words that describe Marco Polo	Words that describe the Traded Items	Words that describe Kublai Kahn

Open Concept Sorts: In open sorts, students are provided with a word bank and must create categories for the words. Note: In the example below, students would have first read and studied marine life.

How would you sort these words about marine life?

algae, plankton, clam, blue whale, crab, dolphin, puffer fish, shark, swordfish, lobster, kelp

Category:	Category:	Category:	Category:

Reflection

Directions: Think about:

1. What did you need to know and be able to do in order to sort words?
2. How may concept sorts increase students' word consciousness? vocabulary? comprehension?