## Session 3: Sorting Questions

**Focusing Question:** *How do we organize our questions?*

**Overview:** Students organize their questions and make a research plan.

**Materials:**
- Evidence and questions for field trip
- Inspiration Software, brainstorming software, or sticky notes
- Handout D

**Length of time to complete**:   One 30 – 40 minute period

**Procedures:**

### A. Sort Questions

- Type questions from the field trip into a brainstorming software or write on to sticky notes.

- Sort questions: Look for similarities in the questions. For instance "leader, political, and government" all go together as do "climate, weather, seasons".

### B: Categorizing Questions

- Create categories for each group and ask a general question of the category. This will guide general topics for research.
- Try to come up with one central question to guide the research in general that could turn in to an opening statement. (see Handout D)

## Handout A: Sorting Questions with Inspiration Software or Sticky Notes

### 1. Brainstorm

The first step is to brainstorm questions you have about the topic. Come up with as many questions as you can—a good number to aim for is 20. These questions can be "literal, right there," "inferential, putting things together" and "essential, big complicated" questions.

This is a sample of questions about a person found on a gravestone.

Are there any artifacts at the historical society that belonged to him?

is there a story that might reveal something about his character?

What political activities?

What economic activities?

Where did he work?

What contributions did he make to Grafton?

Where did Charles White live?

Does the size of his home reveal anything about him?

How can I connect him to American history

What social activities?

What did he do for a living?

What national events did he live through?

Did he live his entire life in Grafton?

Did he have a family?

Was he involved in town government?

Are there any lasting legacies?

Was he a leader in town?

### 2. Sort

The next stage is to look for similarities in your questions. One easy way to do this is to look at the words in the questions. Do you see similar words? For instance: leader, political, and government all go together.

is there a story that might reveal something about his character?

Does the size of his home reveal anything about him?

What economic activities?

Was he a leader in town?

What did he do for a living?

How can I connect him to American history

What national events did he live through?

Where did he work?

Vestus Wilbur, Grafton, VT

Was he involved in town government?

What political activities?

What contributions did he make to Grafton?

Did he live his entire life in Grafton?

Did he have a family?

What social activities?

Where did Charles White live?

Are there any artifacts at the historical society that belonged to him?

Are there any lasting legacies?

## 3. Categorize

Once you have sorted your questions into groups, try creating a category for each group. Once you have created your categories you have the structure of your paper completed. You can see my paper will focus on biography, leadership, and the economy. As a historian, I have also thought about context and significance.

My essential question which would move to the middle would be:
*How do people contribute to their community?*

is there a story that might reveal something about his character?

How can I connect him to American history

What did he do for a living?

Does the size of his home reveal anything about him?

What economic activities?

Was he a leader in town?

What is the historical context of Wilbur's life?

Where did he work?

What political activities?

What national events did he live through?

How did he contribute to the town economy?

Was he a leader?

Was he involved in town government?

What contributions did he make to Grafton?

Vestus, Wilbur, Grafton, VT

*How do people contribute to their community?*

Did he have a family?

Did he live his entire life in Grafton?

What is the significance of Wilbur's life?

Are there any lasting legacies?

What is his family story?

Are there any artifacts at the historical society that belonged to him?

Where did Charles White live?