

Using your 3-Part Cards

Three-part cards were developed by Dr. Montessori's son Mario Montessori. Their purpose is to allow children to read independently at the word level. By isolating a single word that is matched with a photo, the beginning reader has a greater chance of success. You use the cards by showing children how to (1) layout the photo cards, (2) read the word labels and match them to the photo cards, and (3) then use the control cards to check their own work (without any help at all).

Step 1: Presenting the Vocabulary

Of course, before the children will succeed with reading the word labels and matching them to the photos, they need to know the names of all of the leaf shapes featured. You should try to learn the names of the leaf shapes yourself so that you can point out the shapes on real plants in your indoor and outdoor environment. Once you've shown them real leaves that correspond with some of the shapes in this set, you can use the photo cards to teach them the rest of the vocabulary.

The 3-Period lesson is an excellent way to teach vocabulary to a single child or a small group of children. The 3-period lesson works as follows:

1. Begin the lesson by saying, "These cards are so special. They are made from cardstock. We need to wash and dry our hands before we use them." Go together to do so. Make this part of your routine every time you use cardstock materials.
2. **Period 1:** Place 3 or 4 photo-only cards on a clean workspace that is free from distractions. Touch and name the first card. Say, "*This leaf shape is reniform, reniform.*" Repeat for all.
3. **Period 2:** Move your hands away and say, "*Show me reniform.*" If s/he cannot or points to the wrong card, simply use your own hand to point to the correct card and repeat period 1. Continue to ask the child to "show you" the other photos. Keep it lively by asking them to put the cards in different locations. For children who need to move, use two tables on opposite sides of the room and instead of saying "show me" say "bring me." You can teach children how to play the bring me game with each other. It is wonderful independent work. Have fun with it!
4. **Period 3:** Point to a card and say, "*What is this?*" If the child does not say the name, give him/her a hint like the first sound of the word. Do whatever you can to help the child succeed! If s/he still cannot name the object, return to period 2. When the child grows confident with the vocabulary, have fun by mixing up the cards before asking the child to name them. Add an element of mystery by asking the child to close his/her eyes while you or some other children mix up the cards.

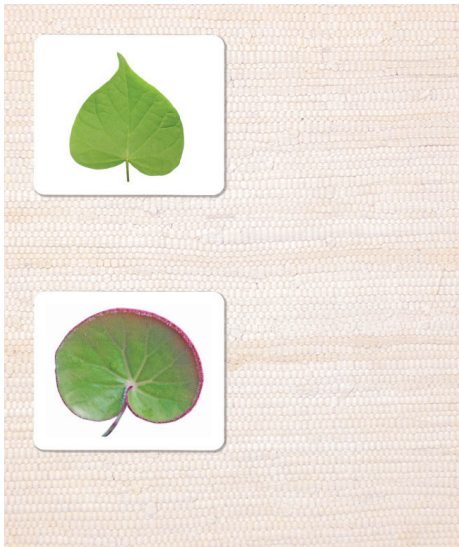


Depending on the child, you may get through all 3 periods in one lesson or you may need to repeat the first two periods over the course of several days before the child is ready to demonstrate mastery in period three. Keep in mind that *it is during the second period that most learning takes place*. Place your emphasis there.

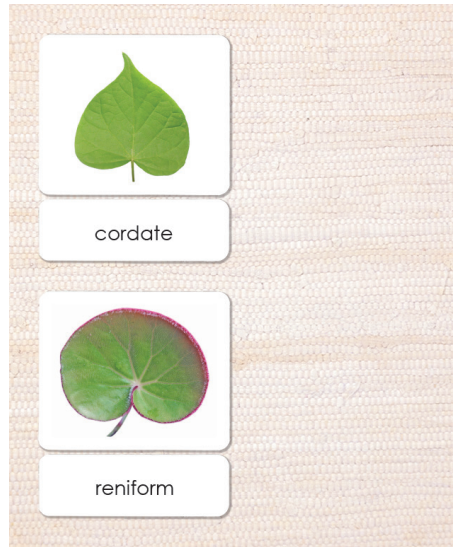
Step 2: Reading the Cards

1. Create a sub group of six 3-part cards for six leaf shapes (six control cards, six photo cards, and six word cards). Group these in a container (e.g., a small tray or cloth pouch) and display them on your child's work shelf. Keep the other cards in storage (but rotate them in and out as your child is ready for more, being sure to leave plenty of opportunity for repetition before introducing new cards).
2. Begin as above by washing your hands then finding a clean workspace that is free from distractions.
3. Place the control cards (which include the word and photo on one card) upside-down on the workspace.
4. Place the picture-only cards right side up in a column on the left side of the workspace. Say the name of each as you put it down.
5. Pick up a word-only card. Say, "Let's see if you can match the pictures with these names." Help them with a few (sound out each letter/phonogram) and then place the labels under the corresponding picture.
6. Say, "Now, let's check and see if we were right!" Layout the control cards next to the matching pictures. Let the child discover his/her own errors and fix them independently. If s/he can't see the errors, s/he may not be ready for this work. Try again another time.
7. Encourage the child to repeat by stacking up the control cards and mixing up the word labels. When they rematch everything, mix up the photo cards but leave the word labels in place. Have fun and encourage them to do the work again and again.

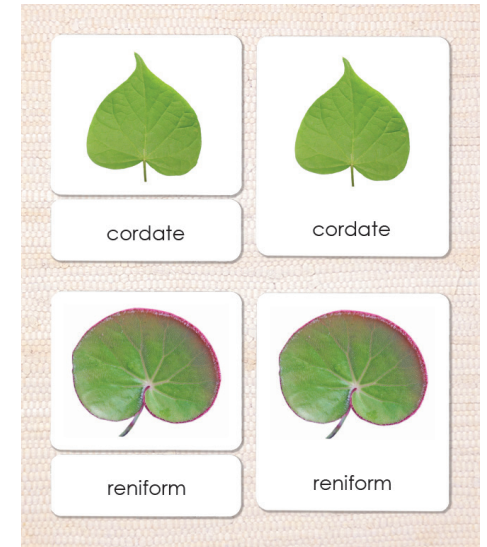
Layout the photo cards



Read and match the word labels



Check work with control cards



Notes

- ▶ Always give the child the opportunity to repeat the work. You or another child can mix up the cards for him/her so she can start over.
- ▶ For fluent readers, you can extend this activity by having him/her copy the words or write the words from memory. Either you or another child can read the words on a few cards to the child. The child then writes them down (using a pencil or the movable alphabet) without looking. If the child wants to, s/he can check the work with the control cards. Be careful not to stress accurate spellings too early (spelling doesn't count before age 6) – this may lead to frustration and resistance to doing the work in the future.