**Montessori Classified Cards**

The importance of Montessori Classified Cards is often overlooked. Classified cards can follow the child for their full 3 years in the Casa (primary) and can be **used for vocabulary, classification, reading, writing, culture, geography, and art**. How many Montessori materials are that versatile?

**Classified Cards are generally designed in a 3-Part Series**; one picture card with a label, one picture card without a label, one label.....example in the photo: farm animals.

On to the reason we use the Classified Cards: **they are meant to be a 'key' to the child.** They help the child to have a greater understanding of their environment, the world, and where things fit in. There are many (most often too many) objects that could be included in each of the sets of cards.

The **direct purpose of Classified Cards is to enrich and enlarge a child's vocabulary, and to aid in the classification of the environment.** This is typically done with no more than 12 cards per set. If you have a larger selection of cards per set you can rotate them, however that can interfere with the **indirect purpose of the cards; which is preparation for further studies.** The cards are meant to give a small introduction to the child; it piques their curiosity and they are then internally driven to find out which other objects belong within the classification.

**Seven ways a set of Classified Cards can be used for a child's 3 years in the Primary (3-6 yr old) classroom**

1) The picture cards (without labels) are used with very young children (2-3 years of age) to **enrich their language**. Simply show them a picture, and using clear and crisp speech say the name of the picture - then ask them to repeat the word. (read How to Use Montessori Nomenclature for specifics on giving this lesson)

2) The picture cards with labels are used for a child who is beginning to read (3-4 years of age). You can use these cards in small groups to play games like "I Spy". This will help children to **make connections between letters and sounds**.  i.e) Using pictures of woodland animals - "I spy with my little eye an animal that starts with the sound 'buh' ..... can anyone show me an animal that starts with the sound 'buh'?"  (bear)

3) The picture cards without the labels and the labels themselves, are used for children who are reading (4-5 years of age). At this stage the child is very familiar with the names of the objects and their classifications as they've been exposed to them for over 2 years. The point now is to read the labels and match them to the objects that they are already familiar with - **it's a reading lesson**. They read the labels, match them to the correct pictures and use the labeled picture cards to check their work (in Montessori we refer to these cards as "control cards").

4) Classified Cards can be used for **printing practice, vocabulary cards, and spelling practice**. Often at the age of 5-6 years a child will start making mini projects. They learn how to pull together all of the information they have been absorbing and inquiring about, and present it on a project board, in lap books, or note-booking.

5) Classified Cards are useful for **introducing children to various cultures**. The difficulty here is finding cards that are in your own language, unless of course you're teaching a second language at the same time. We do have a large variety of 3-Part Cards in our [Geography section](http://www.shop.montessoriprintshop.com/Geography_c31.htm) that introduce children to the animals, food, landmarks, and musical instruments for each the continents. These cards are a wonderful way to expose children to the greatness and variety within our world.

6) Just as the cards are used for introducing various cultures, they too can open doors to **learning about the geography of our world**. It's interesting to see how different cultures dress, eat and live, according to their geographical location.

7) As children begin to further explore and understand the world and the classifications within it, they often enjoy drawing pictures or making models (with clay, papier-mâché, etc). Their exposure to photographic picture cards, images (educational videos), and hopefully the real thing (visiting museum, zoo, field trip, etc) will help them to **solidify the concepts, images, connections and classifications in their mind, and then use their hands (through art) to express and enjoy what they have learned**.

As you can now see, Classified Cards offer the children years of use! **Don't pack them away or let them collect dust on your shelves. Instead, think about how to incorporate them back into an older child's education.** They will look at them with new eyes as their understanding and perception of the world has grown.

For a picture view of how to use 3-Part Cards read [How To Use Montessori Nomenclature](http://www.montessoriprintshop.com/use-nomenclature.html).

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