



Montessori House
Primary Class Curriculum
Second Year

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Sound Comparison and Contrast

In the first year of Primary class, your child worked with Sound Cylinders to practice and develop his or her sense of sound discrimination. This exercise provides an example of how you can build on a basic exercise to add new skills and practice.

Material needed:

- Eight pairs of matching glass bottles with lids
- Eight different types of materials
- Two boxes
- Tray to hold the boxes
- Mat for floor work

The glass bottles can be colored or clear. If they are clear, you can use a blindfold so that your child can isolate his or her sense of sound. If you can find wooden containers that resemble the original cylinders, the sound will be wonderful, but it is hard to find wooden cylinders with lids.

In the bottles, put eight different types of materials that will make contrasting sounds such as sand, rice grains, dried peas, larger dried beans, paper clips, wood chips, pennies, and walnuts in the shell. Label one bottle in the pair with red tape and the other with blue tape. Put one of each pair into a different box. Label each box with tape.

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you for this exercise.
2. Your child can unroll the mat.
3. You can bring the tray with the boxes to the mat and sit with your child.
4. Place the red bottles in the center of the work area.
5. Place the blue bottles beside them.
6. Pick up a red bottle. If the bottles are the same size as the cylinders, place your index finger on top of the bottle, three fingers on the one side, and your thumb on the other side. If the bottles are a bit too big for your child to hold them like this, grasp them with your whole hand (remember to hold them the way your child will need to hold them).
7. Shake the bottle up and down a couple times as you hold it by your ear.
8. Hold it with the other hand and shake it by your other ear.
9. Isolate this red bottle on the table.
10. If you have picked up the bottle with the softest sound, shake it beside your child's ears so that he or she can hear the sound.
11. Invite your child to pair the rest of the bottles.
12. Your child can work independently now and put everything away when he or she is finished.

As with the original cylinders, when there is a mismatch, extra cylinders will usually remain, unless your child has mismatched two pairs. The double mismatch makes it easier to hear mistakes.

After your child has matched these bottles, the next step is for your child to make more matching pairs with different materials that he or she chooses to put inside the bottles.

Note that if your child has trouble distinguishing between different sounds, this may be a clue that he or she has an inner ear infection or hearing loss. You can take the bottles with you when you visit the doctor to help explain the type of sound that your child has trouble hearing.

Your notes

Date of presentation _____ Your child's age _____

Date of successful pairing _____

Materials used in the bottles _____

Observations (e.g. problems, pairing, period of concentration, language):

Science: Using a Microscope

This is an introductory exercise for presenting the use of a microscope to your child.

Materials needed:

- Microscope
- Glass slides
- Three types of sample materials on a small plate to put on slides
- Three flat toothpicks
- Small tray

The microscope should come with glass slides for observing samples that you place on the slide. These initial samples can include such items as a bit of strawberry, a leaf, a piece of fabric, a fingernail cutting, human hair, or the wing of a dried bug. The ends of the toothpicks should be flat, not pointy, or you can use a small knife to spread the material. A toothpick is better because the sample will be a better size.

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you.
2. Walk with your child to the shelf where you keep the microscope.
3. Show him or her how to carry it. Place your dominant hand on the neck of the microscope and the other hand underneath the base. Tell your child that this is how you hold a microscope. Walk to the table and put the microscope down.
4. Your child can bring the tray to the table.
5. Sit down at the table.
6. Pick up a slide using one hand on each end in a three-fingered grip (you could hold it with a single hand, but your child's hands are too small).
7. Prepare the first slide by picking up a toothpick, taking a small sample of the strawberry, and putting it on the slide.
8. Invite your child to look at the slide.
9. Put this slide into the holder on the microscope.
10. Look through the microscope.
11. Invite your child to look through the microscope.
12. Discuss the features of the strawberry that are now visible through the microscope. Tell your the level of magnification (depends on the microscope you buy).
13. Let your child prepare the next slides and examine them through the microscope.
14. At the end of the exercise, let your child carry the microscope back to the shelf. He or she can wash the slides in a plastic basin in the sink.

After this initial presentation, your child will probably expand on the project independently by searching for various types of items to examine under the microscope.

Science - Conducting Experiments

Your child can work with the microscope exercise above for as long as the material is of interest. Before his or her interest wanes, introduce this exercise. This project is special because it takes place over several days or a week, needing daily observation and note taking. This is a good project for two or more children.

Material needed:

- Microscope with a glass slide and flat toothpick
- Two petri dishes
- Container of the material for mold
- Plastic knife
- Plastic wrap
- Note card and a pencil
- Tray

You need some sort of material to put into the jar to create mold such as a tablespoon full of unprocessed natural yogurt, a slice of fruit, or anything else that will mold. Put the petri dishes and other material on the tray.

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you for this exercise.
2. Your child carries the microscope to the table
3. You bring the tray.
4. Explain that the purpose of this project is to grow mold over a period of time. Say, "We will see how long it takes."
5. Use the plastic knife to transfer some material into the petri dish.
6. Mark "Day 1" and put the date and your name.
7. Invite your child to set up the second dish. He or she can mark a second card the same way using his or her name.
8. Tell your child that the two of you will examine the petri dishes each day to see what changes.
9. The two of you put the petri dishes on a shelf and cover them with plastic wrap.
10. Examine the dish each day. Make a note such as "Day 2 - no change" and put the date.
11. Follow up until the materials change and grow mold.
12. You and your child examine the material under the microscope, making the slide the same way you did with the strawberry (make sure to get a scoop of the mold without mashing it -- use the toothpick)

Your child can compare views through the magnifying glass and microscope. Ask your child how the mold looks different through the microscope.

Expansions of this project include comparing and contrasting different substances such as milk and water, taking a nature walk to collect water from different sources and putting it into different petri dishes to see what grows over a week or two, or growing small seeds and examining the details every day.

Your notes

Date of initial microscope presentation ____ Your child's age ____

Date of mold ____ Your child's age ____

Observations for the initial presentation (e.g. carrying the microscope, level of interest, coordination, observation)

Observations the project (e.g. interest in following the growth of the mold, follow up on daily basis, note taking, writing skills, vocabulary use, level of interest)

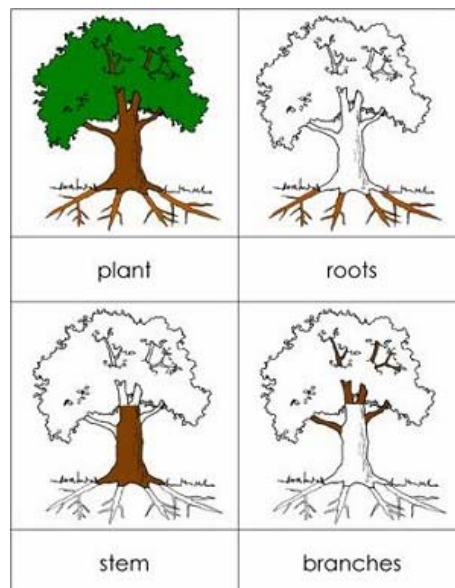
Botany: Parts of a Tree



Puzzles of parts of a tree (left) and parts of a flower (right)

Parts of a tree, flower, leaf, and root system are the four staple botany puzzles supplied by most Primary classes. These are excellent resources and allow children to continue working with their three-fingered grip and hand-eye coordination as they mix and match puzzle pieces as they learn new vocabulary terms and concepts.

Parts of a tree include plant, branches, leaves, roots, stem, and axis of plant.



(continued on 2nd page)

Oral Communication Skills: Game

This game is most fun with a group of children, so we present it in that format. You can play this with your child when he or she has a play date or gather a group of children at home from time to time for these activities.

If you are playing this one on one, take turns. The key is to use succinct descriptive language for each item. Thinking of that item and using the language that way is an important part of the game for your child.

No materials are required.

Presentation:

1. During group time, tell the children, "I am looking at something." "Can you guess what it is?"
2. Begin describing characteristics of the item.
3. Let the children take turns trying to guess what you are looking at, but remember that some of the children's responses will be incorrect, in which case you just let the next child try.
4. Continue until someone identifies it. If no one identifies it, you can say what it is.
5. If the children are good at this game, next time you can have the children take turns playing the leader and describing an item for the others to identify.

Expansion:

Describe items that cannot be seen in the room such as the refrigerator in the kitchen, the mailbox outside, or a fireplace in the living room.

Try giving a series of clues about more difficult items that have several distinguishing characteristics such as function, size, color, shape, and location.

As you describe items, make a conscious use of different parts of speech such as prepositional phrases, articles, adjectives, and adverbs that help describe the item. This will provide your child with language practice that directly ties into the more advanced grammar and language presentations.

Vocabulary Enrichment: Descriptive Language (Intermediate)



In the first year, we introduced basic descriptive language use with simple animal cards. Now, we will expand upon this concept, encouraging your child to add more details and elements of language that he or she will begin to use in formal reading and grammar exercises.

Materials needed:

- Set of eight picture cards with three labels each
- Box for the cards
- Mat for floor work or child-sized table

The labels should include two nouns and one adjective. For example, the card above could have the labels for "polar bear," "cubs," and "ice floe".

Note that we use sophisticated language in a way that makes it clear where it belongs; floe clearly belongs with ice, even though your child may not know what it is when the exercise begins. You can explain it, and your child can look up pictures online or at the library.

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you.
2. Bring the box of cards and sit next to your child.
3. Spread the cards out along the top of the mat.
4. Put the labels randomly at the bottom of the mat.
5. Tell your child there are three labels that describe elements in each picture.
6. Name the polar bear. Find the polar bear label. Put it under the card. Now find the cubs and ice floe labels, and put them under the card. Read each label as you pick it up.
7. Invite your child to try the next one. As you ask, name the card. For example, "Would you like to try the seal card?"

Movable Alphabet — Composing Short Phonetic Words



Materials needed:

- Movable alphabet with different colors for vowels and consonants (shown above)
- Mat for floor work

During the presentation of all Movable Alphabet and language work, the order always goes from left to right, the same order in which we read and write. Your role will be to pronounce words clearly and distinctly, and to guide your child until he or she internalizes the meaning of the sounds and the concept of putting them together to make words.

Presentation:

1. Bring the Movable Alphabet to the rug.
2. Place the lid under the box.
3. Review some of the sound that your child knows, and ask your child to find them in the box and take them out.
4. Ask your child to take out specific letters. For example, as him or her, "Please take out c." "Please take out a." "And now t."
5. Arrange them into a word. Sound it out slowly once, now faster. Does your child say what it is? If not, say it as a whole word now.
6. Repeat for five or six words.
7. You and your child can put the letters back into the box by finding all of the same letters and putting them away at one time. For example, your child can find all the "t's" and put them away.

You can expand on this exercise by asking questions to help your child choose letters that will make words. For example, "What kind of pet barks?" "What is the yellow light in the sky called?"

Movable Alphabet — Objects and Word Building



Children in this age group delight in handling small objects, so look for well-crafted tiny items when you build your object box. Two or more children can work together on all of these Movable Alphabet exercises.

Materials needed:

- Sandpaper Letters
- Movable Alphabet box
- Box of small objects for short "a" words
- Mat for floor work

The object box should have six to eight objects that represent short vowel words. Make a series of boxes for all the vowels, starting with the short "a" words. The words can be three, four, or five letters in length now. Start with a box of objects for three letter CVC words such as bat, cat, cap, hat, rat, map, ham, and jam.

In this presentation, put the Movable Alphabet box on one end of the mat, so that you can use the mat lengthwise to form the words. Put the objects on the right side and the words on the left.

Presentation:

1. Bring the Movable Alphabet and the box of objects to the mat.
2. Put the lid under the box and open the box of objects.
3. Show your child one of the objects, and let your child tell you what it is.
4. Have your child take out the letters for that word. You can sound it out slowly if your child looks as if he or she needs help.
5. Your child can form the word for the object and put it to the right of the object.

6. If your child is doing well, let him or her work with the other objects. Otherwise, work together for another object or two. If this is needed, look for the objects that use the same last two letters as the first one. For example, if you used cat the first time, use hat and rat now.

When your child is comfortable with the short "a" words, he or she can choose other boxes to work with.

You can also create a control sheet for this exercise by taking photos of the objects and writing the word next to them. This allows your child or two children to check their own work, making this a completely independent exercise.

Presentation #2:

Your child writes the words down on three-lined paper.

Presentation #3:

Your child or children complete one of the boxes, and then they think of new words that are not in the box. They can look around the house for these objects, and, if they cannot find them, they can draw them on a card. For example, you might have a real baseball bat, but not an animal bat figurine, so your child could draw the animal. Then he or she would have representations of both "bat" terms.

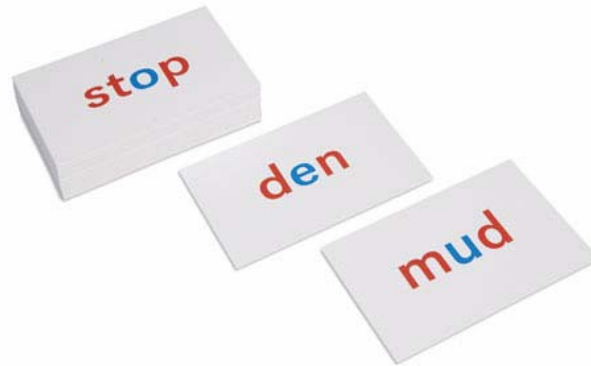
The idea is for an exercise like this to take several hours, or start in the morning and continue after lunch. It is nice to begin slightly long exercises now that require children resuming a project after lunch, so that they get into the habit of continuing their work independently and finishing it, even if it is not immediate.

Presentation #4:

Once your child is comfortable with three-letter short vowel words, create object boxes for longer short vowel words, and then beginning phonogram words (see phonogram section later).

These projects are all perfect for providing representation of spoken words with graphic symbols, refining auditory reception of simple, short vowel and consonant sounds, in preparation for more advanced work. The development of visual and auditory memory and well as the preparation for reading, writing, and spelling, makes this a wonderful series of presentations for this level.

Movable Alphabet — Large Format Word Cards



Materials needed:

- Movable alphabet with different colors for vowels and consonants (shown above)
- Box of word cards
- Mat for floor work

The word cards should use the same color letters as does the Movable Alphabet. If you are making these, you will need at least ten cards for each three-letter short vowel word, and ten cards for four to five letter short vowel cards.

Sort the cards by type: three-letter short "a" words in one box, four- to five-letter short "a" words in another box, short "e" words in another box, and so forth. Arrange them on your language shelf near the Movable Alphabet.

These are large-format cards, which are about four inches high and proportionally as long as the word.

Presentation:

1. Bring the Movable Alphabet and the box of cards to the mat.
2. Put the lid under the box and take a card out of the box.
3. Sound out the first word, and make it with the Movable Alphabet letters.
4. Let your child try the next one.
5. Let your child read them aloud when he or she is finished.

Presentation #2:

Materials needed: Large-format word cards (6 to 8 at least) for all the spellings of sounds your child is working with now including basic phonograms.

Double Sandpaper Letters



Introduce this exercise before you introduce work that presents the words that use these phonograms.

The Double Sandpaper letters include 16 double letter combinations are: er, ee, ar, ou, oo, ai, or, ue, ie, au, oa, sh, ch, oy, th, qu.

Materials needed:

- Double Sandpaper letter set in a box (shown above)
- Mat for floor work

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you for this exercise.
2. Select *ch* and *th* to bring to the mat. Put the cards facedown on the mat.
3. Sit on your child's dominant side.
4. Turn up the first card. Trace the two letters one at a time in the direction in which they are written. As you trace, say *ch*.
5. Say, "When *c* and *h* are together, they make the sound *ch*." (Use only the letter sounds as you describe this.)
6. Trace both letters and repeat the sound.
7. Ask your child if he or she would like to trace the letters. Your child will trace and repeat the sound.
8. Place the next card face up on the right side of the first card. Repeat the steps you used before.
9. Give the three-period lesson with both cards.
10. If your child's level of interest is still high, introduce another pair.

This presentation develops your child's visual recognition of the phonograms, and further develops writing and decoding skills for reading.

Decimal System -- Association in the Decimal Layout



This exercise builds on the Nine Tray Cards and Golden Beads presentation introduced earlier.

Materials needed:

- Tray with nine unit beads, nine ten-bars, nine hundred-squares, and nine thousand cubes
- Box of large number cards 1-9, 10-90, 100-900, and 1000
- Mat for floor work

Put the number cards 2000 through 9000 away for now, and present them later. This exercise is continued through next year, so your child has time to work on this with the smaller numbers, so that he or she can thoroughly internalize the association between the beads and the numbers.

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you as you go to the math shelf to select the bead material and numeral cards. Carry the tray with the bead material and your child can carry the numeral card box. Go to the mat and put everything down.
2. Point to each category, naming the units, tens, hundreds, and thousands.
3. With your child, count all of the units, tens, hundreds, and thousands on the tray. For example, as you count the units, "one unit, two units, three units..."
(continued on the next page)