A. Background of Research

Words are the basic unit of language form. Without a sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively. Having limited vocabulary also barrier that prevents students from learning a foreign language. Learners need to learn vocabulary in order to produce a good sentence and meaningful in both written and spoken language. Rivers in Nunan (1991:117) states that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary the students will be unable to use structure and its function, the students may have learned for comprehensible communication. It is difficult for the students to learn language skills without vocabulary acquisition. That is why vocabulary is important to be mastered.

Vocabulary has function to make it easy for two people who communicate each other in written and spoken language. Thus, teacher has crucial role in teaching and learning process. At any rate, there are still many problems which are found in teaching and learning vocabulary. It is a responsibility to investigate and find out the reasons for students’ failure in learning vocabulary and analyze the reasons then give the solution of the problems.

In fact, based on the pre-observation result conducted of the first grade of SMP Gunung Jati on August 2013, it was found that the students are lack
vocabulary because the vocabularies that teacher’s taught still difficult to be remembered by the students. Moreover, the students are less motivated to learn vocabulary because it is captured in their mind that learning vocabulary is hard and boring activity.

The common problem was that the teacher did not apply the appropriate and interesting media in teaching vocabulary. Teacher uses text book (LKS) or word list as media to teach students about vocabulary. In this case, the teacher needs a good media to help the students to solve those problems.

Good media has clear and tidy criteria; it must be clean and attractive; match the target; relevant to the topic being taught; accordance with the purpose of learning; practical, flexible, and resistant; having good quality, and the size is appropriate for learning environment (Asyhar, 2012:81-82).

Using a good media will make the students enjoy joining the lessons.

Asyhar (2012:5) states media is a tool or device that serves as an intermediary in a process of communication between the communicator with the communicant. For this reason, most learners appreciate media and enjoy participating, even when the learners are not familiar enough with the media that will be used. One of the media that is able to be used is flashcard. A flashcard is part of a set of cards on which are written items to be studied. (Amalia and Zainudin:2012).

The activity using flashcards is particularly useful for getting students’ attention at the beginning of the lesson or at the beginning of a new unit of work after a lesson has begun. Showing the flashcards to the students will
make the students are interesting about vocabulary. The students not only focus on picture, but also on the writing or meaning the vocabulary. It will make the students easy to memorize and pronounce the vocabulary clearly. Komachali and Khodaeza (2012), states working with flashcards help learners in acquiring vocabulary more effectively than word lists. Flashcards are widely used as a learning drill to add memorization by way of spaced repetition.

This research was conducted with the title “The Effectiveness of Flashcards to Teach Students’ Vocabulary Mastery at The First Grade of SMP Gunung Jati Kembaran”

B. Problem of the research

The problem of this research is “is it effective to teach vocabulary using flashcard at the first grade of SMP Gunung Jati Kembaran?”

C. The aim of the research

The aim of the research is “to know whether it is effective to teach vocabulary using flashcard at Junior High School especially of first grade students”.

D. Reason for Choosing the Topic

There are some reasons for choosing the topic those are:
1. Vocabulary is the main problem faced by the students in teaching learning English. The students cannot learn English and communicate well without vocabulary.

2. Flashcard is a mere interest media in teaching learning process. It is easy for students to be understood.

E. Clarification of the Term

The title of this research is The Effectiveness of Flashcard to Teach Students’ Vocabulary Mastery of the first grade students in SMP Gunung Jati. The terms which are stated in title above needs to be defined in order to get some perception of the key terms

1. Effectiveness

   Effectiveness is comparison between degrees of goal of attainment with previous arranged planning, or the comparison of the real result with planned of result (Mulyasa:173)

2. Flashcard

   A flashcard is part of a set of cards on which are written items to be studied. (Amalia and Zainuddin: 2012)

   Flashcard is a set of cards bearing information, as words or numbers, on either or both sides, used in classroom drills or in private study.(Wikipedia)
3. Teaching Vocabulary

a. Teaching

According Brown (2000:7), teaching is showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instruction, guiding in the study on something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand.

b. Vocabulary

According to Suryanto (2007:43), vocabulary is stock of words which the language had and gives meaning if we use the language.

F. Contribution

This research will give contribution for all of English teachers and students in SMP Gunung Jati.

a. Teacher

- Teacher can use flashcard as appropriate media for the student.
- The teacher has some experience in using flashcard for teaching English.

b. Student

- The students have an experience of learning vocabulary through flashcard to solve the problem for understanding in meaning.
- Be motivated, enjoyable, and interested in learning vocabulary.