

# Teaching Guide to *Shortcuts* by Jeff Harris

## Introduction

*Shortcuts* by Jeff Harris is a beautifully illustrated, fact-packed page that makes learning fun. Each week, *Shortcuts'* multicultural cast (Juanita, K., Roland, Junior and James) offers facts, riddles, jokes and puzzles to help kids learn about science, geography, animals, food, history and holidays.

Each teaching guide provides ideas for expanding the lesson and creating discussion and learning activities for your students. The grade level for the guides is usually 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, but they can be adapted for use at other levels. The guides are broken down into four areas:

### **1. Questions for Discussion and Further Study**

Designed to help students think and research, not just give one-word answers

### **2. Activity Ideas**

Designed to allow students to be creative and teach themselves

### **3. Use the News**

Designed to have students use the news in studying each topic

### **4. Quick Quiz**

Designed to be adaptable to several grade levels, evaluate students' comprehension and build vocabulary and math skills

You might use the teaching guides in the following ways:

**Questions for Discussion and Further Study:** Engage the entire class by asking each question aloud and listing the students' answers on the board. Or have them use reference resources to give their own answers to the questions. Allow them to discuss other students' answers after they've researched the topics. Key words or phrases that can help students search for more information are italicized.

**Activity Ideas:** Give the students a time limit to research their projects, using library or study time. By having the students cite their resources you can check their work; or, alternatively, tell them which resource(s) you prefer them to use.

**Use the News:** These can be worked on individually but we suggest they work in groups to learn teamwork skills.

- **Quick Quiz:** We suggest you review the quizzes ahead of time and change the phrasing or difficulty level based on the students' abilities.

# **Shortcuts: THE UPS AND DOWNS OF THE HIMALAYAS**

For release the week of: January 16, 2012

**Objective:** After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding of the Himalayas.

**Subject Areas:** The following information about the Himalayas will be discussed:

- The basics of surveying
- How high is Mt. Everest compared to other tall things?
- Visiting the Himalayas

**Evaluation:** Students may be evaluated using the following point scale:

*Four points:* Information is accurate, organized, shows creative thought/use of materials

*Three points:* Information is accurate and organized

*Two points:* Information is mostly accurate; organization needs some work

*One point:* Significant inaccuracies; lacks organization

## **Topics for Discussion and Further Study**

1. What countries are in the Himalaya mountain range?
2. What kinds of animals are native to this area?

## **Activity Ideas**

- Sir George Everest was the first surveyor to locate Mt. Everest in 1841. How do surveyors figure out how tall something like a mountain is? What instruments do they use? What kinds of mathematics are needed? Research and describe the steps a surveyor uses to measure how tall something is.
- How high is Mt. Everest compared to other mountains and man-made structures? Research and make a diagram showing “relatively” how high are Mt. Everest, a human, Mt. Denali, a radio tower, the tallest building, etc.

### **Use the News**

- There are many sights to see in the Himalayas. What could a tourist do and see in this amazing location? Research and write a travel newspaper article for visiting the Himalayas.

## **Answers to the Quiz**

1.) a, 2.) c, 3.) b, 4.) c, 5.) b, 6.) c, 7.) snow, 8.) fold 9.) 2 billion, 10.) 200 years

## **Quick Quiz — The Himalayas**

1. Mt. Everest is the tallest mountain peak in the world.  
a. True b. False
2. The river systems that begin in the greater Himalaya mountain system affect the lives of nearly \_\_\_\_\_ of the humans on our planet.  
a. 1/10 b. 1/5 c. 1/3 d. 1/2
3. Sir George Everest was the first climber to reach the summit of Mt. Everest.  
a. True b. False
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ are a group of people who live high in the mountains on the eastern part of the Himalayas.  
a. Yaks b. Sanskrit c. Sherpas d. Cambodians
5. The Himalaya Mountains are home to only about 50 glaciers.  
a. True b. False
6. Mt. Everest is about \_\_\_\_\_ feet tall.  
a. 2,000 b. 12,000 c. 29,000 d. 36,000

## **Vocabulary Comprehension**

7. “Himalaya” is Sanskrit for “abode of \_\_\_\_\_.”
8. According to the theory of plate tectonics, the Himalayas are \_\_\_\_\_ type mountains that were formed from colliding tectonic plates.

### **Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)**

9.  $\frac{1}{3}$  of 6 billion people is how many?
10. If the Himalayas rise 5 mm every year, how many years will it take to rise one meter?