

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 3rd to 4th, 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: CHIPPING AWAY AT THE STONE AGE

For release the week of: March 12, 2012

Objective: After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding of the Stone Age.

Subject Areas: The following information about the Stone Age will be discussed:

- Domestication of animals
- Tools of the Stone Age
- How stone tools were made

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. How might have ancient people discovered how to make bronze tools, and therefore move out of the Stone Age?
2. What animals were first domesticated?

Activity Ideas

- What tools were used, and how did the tools change from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic ages? Research and make a timeline or chart showing these three ages and various tools from them.
- How were stone and bone tools created? How was a fire started by prehistoric people? Did they start a new one each time they needed it? Research and describe these ancient activities.

Use the News

- Art is one of the creations that mark the beginning of civilization. Can you find examples of art in our modern culture? As you read the newspaper look for art in pictures, articles, and advertisements. Is some art included in our tools and technology? Is some purely for enjoyment and enlightenment?

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) b, 3.) a, 4.) a, 5.) a, 6.) d , 7.) million, 8.) bone 9.) 2,000 , 10.) more recent

Quick Quiz — The Stone Age

1. Some cultures still use Stone Age tools.
a. True b. False
2. Scientists divide the Stone Age into _____ periods.
a. two b. three c. five d. eight
3. Language was developed during the Stone Age.
a. True b. False
4. The beginning of the _____ Age ended the Stone Age.
a. Bronze b. Iron c. Farming d. Information
5. Some Stone Age tools include sewing needles.
a. True b. False
6. The Stone Age includes the _____ period.
a. Mesolithic b. Neolithic c. Paleolithic d. all of the above

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. The Stone Age refers to a period that began more than two _____ years ago.
8. Tools from the Stone Age were made of materials such as stone, wood, and _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. How many thousands are there in 2 million?
10. Is 4000 BC more recent or more ancient than 9000 BC ?