

# 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: GETTING STUCK ON SQUID

For release the week of: October 8, 2012

**Objective:** After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding about squid.

**Subject Areas:** The following information about squid will be discussed:

- Squid and octopus comparison
- Giant squid behavior
- Anatomy of a squid

**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. Have any people ever been killed by a squid?
2. What's the difference between a squid and an octopus?

## Activity Ideas

- Squid are intelligent and in some cases fierce. The jumbo or Humboldt squid can be 7 feet long and has been known to behave dangerously when in a feeding frenzy. Here is an interesting short documentary on these interesting sea creatures.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQKs1-fwTgU>
- What is the anatomy of a squid? Label the squid diagram on this webpage with the body parts listed. The right-hand link "A page on squid" provides more information and the labeled diagram.  
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/invertebrates/squid/label/>

### Use the News

- Squid are able to instantly change the color of their skin, possibly to communicate with other squid or signal danger. Is color important to people? Read the newspaper for examples of a written description using color. Do reporters include mention of colors? How might an existing article you read change by adding color words to the text? Try it and share your work.

## Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) a, 3.) a, 4.) d, 5.) b, 6.) c , 7.) skin, 8.) beak 9.) 1,800, 10.) 125 lbs.

# Quick Quiz — Squid

1. The only bone in a squid's body is its skull.  
a. True b. False
2. Giant squid have the largest \_\_\_\_\_ in the animal kingdom.  
a. eyes b. teeth c. mouths d. stomachs
3. Squid are found in all of the world's oceans.  
a. True b. False
4. A squid's body is a tubelike structure called a \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. pen b. beak c. chromatophore d. mantle
5. Squid are not predators.  
a. True b. False
6. A squid's mouth is surrounded by \_\_\_\_\_ arms and two long tentacles.  
a. four b. six c. eight d. ten

## Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Squid have special cells in their \_\_\_\_\_ called “chromatophores.”
8. Squid have a sharp \_\_\_\_\_ similar to a bird's.

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

9. How many centimeters is an 18-meter giant squid?
10. If a fisherman caught five squid at 25 pounds each, how much would the total weight be?