

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 Newspaper

Designed to have students use the newspaper 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 Newspaper: 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: CHECKING ON CHICKENS

For release the week of: September 2, 2013

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

Subject Areas: The following information about chickens will be discussed:

- How are chickens raised?
- What are the various breeds of chickens?
- Backyard city chickens

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. Why do some people prefer meat and eggs from “free range” chickens? What is “free range” and how are some large commercial chicken farms different?
2. Do chickens mainly like to eat grains? What kind of “eaters” are they?

Activity Ideas

- There are many different breeds of chickens. Some are very interesting. Do an internet search for chicken pictures to cut and paste them into a chicken collage document or PowerPoint show. Try to include the name of the breed also.
- Some people keep a few chickens as pets or for their eggs. Many cities are starting to allow people to raise a few in their backyards. Check out a few Internet videos about people and their backyard chickens. Here’s one to get you started: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzg4duLzj2k>

Use the Newspaper

- ❖ Does your city allow backyard chickens? You may be able to check online or call city hall to find out. What is your opinion about urban chicken coops? Do some research and then write an editorial-style article that could appear in a newspaper to support or reject the idea of city dwellers raising some of their own chickens.

Answers to the Quiz

- 1.) a, 2.) c, 3.) a, 4.) d, 5.) b, 6.) b, 7.) comb, 8.) wattle, 9.) 208, 10.) 91

Quick Quiz — Chickens

1. Chickens build their nests on the ground.
a. True b. False
2. The _____ is the one of the largest breeds of chicken.
a. Silkie b. Rhode Island Red
c. Jersey Giant d. New York Giant
3. There are more chickens than any other species of bird.
a. True b. False
4. Scientists believe modern chickens developed from a wild bird in _____.
a. India b. South America
c. Mexico d. Southeast Asia
5. A commercial egg-laying hen may produce about 600 eggs per year.
a. True b. False
6. Chickens have 4 basic types of combs – the single, cushion, rose, and _____ comb.
a. corn b. pea
c. star d. straight

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. The fleshy growth on top of a chicken's head is called the _____.
8. The fleshy growth below a chicken's beak is called the _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If a hen lays about 4 eggs a week, how many would it lay in a 52-week year?
10. How many pounds are seven 13-lb. chickens?