

# 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: READING BETWEEN THE LINES OF BOOKS**

For release the week of: January 20, 2014

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

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

- Speed-reading books
- How did the Gutenberg press work?
- How are modern books 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. What are the largest and smallest books ever made?
2. How fast do most people read? Should we learn to speed-read?

## **Activity Ideas**

- How are books made? How do the printed pages become bound to the covers? There are a few different methods used by modern book publishers. Watch this video to see two of them. Why do you think books are cheaper to make today than they were many years ago? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfcEFEaxaLs>
- Johannes Gutenberg is credited with inventing the mechanical moveable-type printing press. He introduced this process to Europe in the 1400s. The Gutenberg Bible is one of his most important productions. What did this press look like, and how did it work? Research his innovative machine and describe or show how it worked. You may be able to find videos showing how these presses functioned, or you could describe how it worked.

## **Use the News**

- Today, many people watch television or movies than they read books. Do you think books are better than other forms of media? Think about your reasons for your opinion. Now write a newspaper editorial giving your opinion about how videos are just as good as books, or how people should at least read more books.

## **Answers to the Quiz**

1.) a, 2.) d, 3.) a, 4.) b, 5.) a, 6.) c , 7.) scroll, 8.) codex, 9.) 1/2 , 10.) 61

# Quick Quiz — Books

1. Paper was made out of cotton starting about 800 years ago.  
a. True b. False
2. Parchment paper was made out of \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. bamboo b. papyrus c. cotton d. animal skins
3. The text in some ancient books did not have spaces between the words.  
a. True b. False
4. Printing presses that used movable type were first used in \_\_\_\_\_ about 1,000 years ago.  
a. America b. China c. Europe d. Korea
5. Egyptian scrolls were some of the first books ever created.  
a. True b. False
6. Books became \_\_\_\_\_ with the invention of the printing press.  
a. hard to read b. expensive c. inexpensive d. scarce

## Vocabulary Comprehension

7. A long rolled-up piece of material with writing on it is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Written pages sewn together are an ancient type of book called a \_\_\_\_\_.

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

9. If you read 67 pages of a 134-page book, what fraction of the book will you have read?
10. If you read 30 pages from the beginning, then 12 pages, then 19 pages, what page will you be on?