

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: TAKING THE STING OUT OF WASPS

For release the week of: October 10, 2011

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

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

- Wasp nests
- How to care for a wasp sting
- Comparison of social and solitary wasps

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 is the most powerful type of venom found in a wasp's stinger?
2. What is the largest wasp nest ever found?

Activity Ideas

- Why do wasp stings hurt? What happens in your body? Research your body's reaction to a sting. Next, how should it be dealt with? Here's a webpage with some medical advice: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002857.htm>
- What is the difference between a “social” wasp and a “solitary” wasp? What do these two words mean? Make a word list for both types of wasp. What are the comparable characteristics of each? How are they the same? Different?

Use the News

- After researching information for the first activity (wasp stings), write your own brief health news article, summarizing the information and advice to give a sting victim. Keep it simple, easy to understand, and focused.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) a, 3.) b, 4.) d, 5.) a, 6.) d, 7.) hornets, 8.) insect, 9.) 39, 10.) 3

Quick Quiz — Wasps

1. Only male wasps have stingers.
a. True b. False
2. Solitary wasps tend to live in _____.
a. burrows b. paper nests c. leaf nests d. hives
3. The stinger of a wasp is very similar to a bee's.
a. True b. False
4. Not all wasps have _____.
a. eyes b. antennae c. legs d. wings
5. The sting of a social wasp is worse than that of a solitary wasp.
a. True b. False
6. Wasps are closely related to bees and _____.
a. beetles b. Beetles c. aunts d. ants

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Larger social wasps are often called “yellow jackets” or “_____.”
8. Each species of wasp tends to hunt one specific type of _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If 56 wasps are in a nest, and 17 fly out, how many are left in the nest?
10. If 15 wasps are divided evenly into 5 jars, how many wasps are in each jar?