

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: THE TERRIBLE TRUTH ABOUT TYRANNOSAURUS REX

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Objective: After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding about Tyrannosaurus rex.

Subject Areas: The following information about Tyrannosaurus rex will be discussed:

- Physical appearance
- Predator or scavenger?
- Warm or cold-blooded?

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. Was T. rex a reptile?
2. Is the science (cloning) used in "Jurassic Park" possible today?

Activity Ideas

- Use modeling clay to sculpt your own model of a T. rex. Be sure to research the latest pictures of T. rex fossils and artists versions of what they may have looked like. Try positioning them in various active positions. i.e. Running, eating, sleeping, hunting, etc.
- Scientists still aren't sure if T. rex was a scavenger or a predator. What is the difference between these two types of carnivores? What is a carnivore? Research and write a brief summary.

Use the News

- Imagine you discovered a T. rex fossil. Where might you have found it? Backyard, camping trip, hunting trip, school playground, etc. Write an interview for the newspaper, in which a reporter asks you questions about your discovery.

Answers to the Quiz

- 1.) a, 2.) a, 3.) b, 4.) d, 5.) a, 6.) d, 7.) distances, 8.) king, 9.) 36, 10.) 4

Quick Quiz — Tyrannosaurus Rex

1. T. rex's arms were extremely powerful.
a. True b. False
2. The huge _____ of a T. rex could be nearly 5 ft. in length.
a. skull b. feet c. teeth d. tail
3. Most T. rex remains are found in Asia.
a. True b. False
4. A full-grown T. rex was about _____ ft. in length.
a. 10 b. 20 c. 40 d. 100
5. Tyrannosaurus Rex had a good sense of smell.
a. True b. False
6. The first T. rex skeleton went on display in 1906 in the American Museum of Natural History in _____.
a. Philadelphia b. Los Angeles c. London d. New York City

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. T. rex's eyes faced forward allowing it to accurately judge _____.
8. "Rex" is Latin for "_____."

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If a dinosaur had three dozen teeth, what number would that be?
10. If 136 students came to a museum to view the T. rex display, but only 34 could see it at a time, how many groups would they have to divide into?