

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: AMAZING ORANGUTANS

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

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

- How smart are orangutans?
- How are they different from monkeys?
- What is their habitat like?

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 kinds of things do orangutans do that show they are intelligent creatures?
2. Why do an orangutan's arms need to be longer than its legs? How does it help?

Activity Ideas

- Orangutans are classified as an ape, not a monkey. What is the difference between an ape and a monkey? Research and report on this comparison.
- Wild orangutans only live in Borneo and Sumatra. Where are these places? What are they like? Choose one of the two islands to learn about, and write a brief description of the island and its people, animals and plants.

Use the News

- Orangutans are not social animals. They live alone most of the time. What examples of social behavior can you find in the newspaper? Who works together in groups? Who works alone?

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) c, 3.) b, 4.) a, 5.) a, 6.) a, 7.) forest, 8.) predators, 9.) 11 kg , 10.) 3

Quick Quiz — Orangutans

1. Orangutans spend almost their entire lives high in the trees.
a. True b. False
2. Today, wild orangutans are found only on the islands of Borneo and _____.
a. Japan b. Hawaii c. Sumatra d. Madagascar
3. Orangutans are not an endangered species anymore.
a. True b. False
4. Orangutans feed mainly on _____.
a. fruit b. meat c. insects d. fish
5. Orangutans spend most of their time alone.
a. True b. False
6. They construct a new nest high in the trees every _____.
a. evening b. week c. month d. year

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. The name orangutan comes from the Malay words for “person of the _____.”
8. Tigers and leopards are some of the few natural _____ of orangutans.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. What's the difference in weight between an 80 kg ape and a 69 kg ape?
10. If an orangutan's legs are $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long, then its arms are _____ ft. long (twice as long).