

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: A COLORFUL LOOK AT TOUCANS

For release the week of: January 30, 2012

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

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

- Colors of toucans
- Observing toucans
- Toucans as pets

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. Do toucans migrate?
2. Can toucans learn to “talk” like parrots can?

Activity Ideas

- Toucans are very unique and colorful birds. Be creative and make a close-up picture of one. Pretend you're looking through a telephoto camera lens. You could use markers, colored pencils, pastels, paint, etc. You may want to look over various photographs of toucans from books and the Internet.
- Take a look at some videos of captive and wild toucans. What advantages and disadvantages do think that long beak gives these birds?
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jVj8_9TDRM&feature=related
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REuOu-I9I1w&feature=related> Here is a video of two toucans dueling: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71D6drsIWIM&feature=related>

Use the News

- Can toucans be kept as pets? Is it legal? How do you care for them? Research the possibility of keeping toucans as pets and write a brief news article that you might read in a newspaper about pets.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) b, 3.) a, 4.) a, 5.) b, 6.) d, 7.) honeycomb, 8.) color 9.) 32, 10.) 21

Quick Quiz — Toucans

1. Toucans tend to live most of their lives alone.
a. True b. False
2. Wild toucans are found in the forests of Central America and _____.
a. Africa b. South America c. China d. Australia
3. Toucans are easily tamed.
a. True b. False
4. A toucan's _____ is long and flat with bristles on each side.
a. tongue b. beak c. toe d. tail
5. Only male toucans sit on the eggs in their nest.
a. True b. False
6. Toucans feed mainly on _____.
a. bugs b. seeds c. worms d. fruit

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. A toucan's large beak is constructed with a _____ structure.
8. Unlike many other birds, male and female toucans are very similar in _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If a toucan eats 8 grams of fruit each day for 4 days, how many grams will that he have eaten?
10. If a flock of toucans ate 12 bananas out of a bunch of 33 bananas, how many would that leave?