

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 LONG LOOK AT THE NILE RIVER

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

Subject Areas: The following information about the Nile River will be discussed:

- Fish in the Nile
- Tourism on the Nile
- Where the Nile River is located

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 fish can be caught in the Nile River?
2. How big is the Aswan High Dam?

Activity Ideas

- If someone wanted to explore the Nile River, what special locations should they visit? What cities are there? What ancient ruins are there? What unique natural features are along its banks? Etc. Write a tour guide of interesting places to visit.
- Where in the world is the Nile River? Draw your own map of the Nile River. What continent is it in? What countries does it run through? What cities are along its path? Etc.

Use the News

- What current events are reported from the countries around the Nile River? What is happening in this part of the world? Check out the international news section of your newspaper for information about this area. Share what you find with the class.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) a, 3.) a, 4.) d, 5.) a, 6.) c, 7.) floods, 8.) silt 9.) 30%, 10.) 2,230 km

Quick Quiz — The Nile River

1. The Nile River is the longest river in the world.
a. True b. False
2. The Nile River is formed by two major branches: the White Nile and the _____ Nile.
a. Blue b. Green c. Red d. Yellow
3. The Nile River flows northward.
a. True b. False
4. Nearly all of the people of _____ live in the Nile Valley or the Nile Delta.
a. Iran b. Iraq c. Israel d. Egypt
5. The Blue Nile supplies most of the water for the Nile River.
a. True b. False
6. The Nile River flows into the _____.
a. Black Sea b. Atlantic Ocean c. Mediterranean Sea d. Indian Ocean

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. The annual _____ ended in Egypt when the Aswan High Dam was constructed in the late 1960s.
8. More fertilizer was needed because the Nile no longer delivered a new layer of fertile _____ with each flood.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If the Blue Nile supplies 70% of the Nile's water, what percentage does the White Nile provide?
10. How much is a third of the Nile's 6,690 km length?