

# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 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: PAINTING A PICTURE OF GRAFFITI**

For release the week of: February 13, 2012

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

**Subject Areas:** The following information about graffiti will be discussed:

- Ancient vs. modern graffiti
- Making your own graffiti
- Famous “writers”

**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. In your opinion, when should graffiti be allowed or not allowed?
2. Look in books or online for examples of ancient graffiti. How is it different or similar to modern graffiti?

## **Activity Ideas**

- Whether you're a “writer” or not, you can use this online website to create your own graffiti. Just type in the word or words, and then make adjustments until it looks the way you want it to. <http://www.graffiticreator.net/>
- Do you appreciate graffiti? Here is some information about some of the most famous writers and links to their pieces. Check them out and then write or talk about the ones you like. Try to explain your choices. <http://www.life123.com/arts-culture/art-history/graffiti/famous-graffiti-artists.shtml>

### **Use the News**

- Read the newspaper to get an idea for the placement of a graffiti piece. What building or location did you read about? Why would it be an interesting place for a requested piece of street art? Share your ideas with the class.

## **Answers to the Quiz**

1.) b, 2.) d, 3.) a, 4.) a, 5.) a, 6.) b , 7.) tag, 8.) writers 9.) 20, 10.) 25

# Quick Quiz — Graffiti

1. The word “graffiti” is Chinese.  
a. True b. False
2. Some of the first modern forms of graffiti were created in Philadelphia and \_\_\_\_\_ in the early 1960s.  
a. Hong Kong b. Berlin c. Paris d. New York City
3. Sometimes, the best way to fight unwanted graffiti is to allow it in some other place.  
a. True b. False
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a large, elaborate tag using one or two colors.  
a. throw up b. tag c. piece d. wild style
5. Some art galleries display graffiti.  
a. True b. False
6. “\_\_\_\_\_” is a highly abstract form of graffiti with twisting and interlocking images.  
a. Throw up b. Wild style c. Masterpiece d. Tag

## Vocabulary Comprehension

7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a quick design that is usually the writer's nickname.
8. Many graffiti artists prefer to call themselves “\_\_\_\_\_.”

### Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If a “piece” used  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cans of paint, when each can had 8 ounces of paint in it, how many ounces would have been used?
10. If a “throw up” is 5 feet wide by 5 feet tall, how many square feet is that?