

# 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: SWIMMING WITH SEA TURTLES**

For release the week of: February 27, 2012

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

**Subject Areas:** The following information about sea turtles will be discussed:

- Sea turtle navigation
- Sea turtle appearance
- Sea turtle conservation

**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. To where do some sea turtles migrate? Where do they start?
2. How do female sea turtles find their way back to the same beach every year to lay eggs?  
(This webpage has some good information).

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/02/070226131640.htm>

## **Activity Ideas**

- Here is a four-minute video about sea turtles. Practice your note-taking skills with this video. Compare the notes you take with those of your classmates. Share any ideas each of you has about how you were able to listen and write at the same time. Did anyone get lots of notes? Ask them about their techniques. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFDBtVupyqY&feature=related>
- Use books and the Internet to examine several views of one species of sea turtle. Print them out if possible for reference. Finally, use modeling clay or a similar material to sculpt your own small model of one of these marine creatures. Correct color is not as important for this activity. Form, structure and proportion are the main objectives.

### **Use the News**

- Humans are the biggest problem in the survival of sea turtles. Building new homes and hotels along the beaches that the turtles use for nesting grounds affects them. Poor people living in these areas collect the eggs to eat or sell. It is illegal, but many poachers do it anyway. One sea turtle conservation organization decided to pay local people NOT to steal the eggs, and so far it is working pretty well. There are some people that think paying someone not to do something illegal is wrong. What do you think? Read this article together and share your opinions. <http://costaricanconservationnetwork.wordpress.com/2010/04/07/i-will-pay-you-to-not-steal-sea-turtle-eggs/>

# Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) c, 3.) b, 4.) b, 5.) a, 6.) a, 7.) year, 8.) sea 9.) 3,000 pounds, 10.) 36

## Quick Quiz — Sea Turtles

1. The steelback is the largest species of sea turtle.  
a. True b. False
2. All seven species of sea turtles are \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. extinct b. freshwater c. endangered d. slow
3. Most sea turtles prefer cooler ocean water.  
a. True b. False
4. The huge \_\_\_\_\_ sea turtle is extinct.  
a. leatherback b. archelon c. hawksbill d. gamera
5. Sea turtles cannot pull their heads inside their shells.  
a. True b. False
6. Most sea turtles are \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. omnivores b. herbivores c. carnivores d. insectivores

## Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Some sea turtles migrate thousands of kilometers in a single \_\_\_\_\_.
8. After hatching, male sea turtles spend their entire lives at \_\_\_\_\_.

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

9. How much would two turtles weigh combined, if each were 1,500 pounds?
10. If a baby sea turtle took a day and a half to dig its way to the surface of a beach, how many hours would that be?