

# 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: TURNING BACK THE CLOCK ON ANCIENT JAPAN**

For release the week of: March 19, 2012

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

**Subject Areas:** The following information about ancient Japan will be discussed:

- Emperors, shoguns, and samurai
- Sumo
- Japanese news

**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. Why were ancient samurai swords so long?
2. Why is Japan known as “the land of the rising sun”?

## **Activity Ideas**

- What were ancient Japanese emperors, shoguns, and samurai like? How were they chosen? What did they do? Choose one of these types of Japanese people and report on them. Pictures of how they dressed would be interesting.
- Sumo wrestling began during the Edo period. Explore the history and rules of Sumo in this website. Be sure to try the link that allows you to play an online Sumo game. Also there is a link to make your own paper Sumo wrestlers to play with. <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/virtual/sumo/sumo01.html>

### **Use the News**

- What news is happening in Japan? Your newspaper may have some news, or you could go online to a news site such as: <http://www.newsonjapan.com/> to read about what the headline news is there.

## **Answers to the Quiz**

1.) a, 2.) b, 3.) b, 4.) a, 5.) a, 6.) c , 7.) cord, 8.) statues 9.) 264 , 10.) 112

# Quick Quiz — Ancient Japan

1. Scientists believe humans have been living in Japan for more than 30,000 years.  
a. True b. False
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ was a military leader appointed by the emperor.  
a. sumo b. shogun c. samurai d. jomon
3. Ancient Japanese culture was greatly influenced by America.  
a. True b. False
4. The earliest Japanese era was named the \_\_\_\_\_ era.  
a. Jamon b. Yayoi c. Kofun d. Shogun
5. The ancient Chinese taught the Japanese how to grow rice.  
a. True b. False
6. Thousands of years ago, lower sea levels connected Japan to \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. India b. Australia c. Korea d. Thailand

## Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Jomon means “\_\_\_\_\_ -marked.”
8. Ancient tombs were guarded by terra-cotta \_\_\_\_\_.

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

9. If there were 12 groups of 22 samurai, how many would that be?
10. If each samurai needed 2 swords, how many swords would be needed for 56 samurai?