

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 QUICK LOOK AT THE OSTRICH

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Objective: After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding about ostriches.

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

- Social behavior
- How ostriches defend themselves
- Size comparison

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 does an ostrich make its nest out of?
2. Do ostriches gather in flocks?

Activity Ideas

- How dangerous is a large ostrich? How do they defend themselves? Do any animals prey on them? Research and report on what you find.
- Ostriches are the largest birds of the modern world. Hummingbirds are the smallest. There are many sizes in between. Research different birds and make a comparison chart showing their relative sizes. The chosen birds could be drawn, or a bar chart could be created.

Use the News

- The information in this Shortcuts comic is fact. Most newspapers also include opinion articles also. What's the difference? Read the newspaper and identify the articles as fact or fiction.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) b, 3.) b, 4.) b, 5.) b, 6.) a , 7.) eggs, 8.) day 9.) 10 km , 10.) 0.5 m

Quick Quiz — Ostriches

1. Ostriches have the largest eyes of any land animal.
a. True b. False

2. The ostrich has only _____ toes on each foot.
a. one b. two c. three d. four
3. The male sits on the eggs during the day.
a. True b. False
4. An ostrich egg is about _____ inches in diameter.
a. 2 b. 6 c. 12 d. 20
5. Ostriches actually do stick their heads in the sand when faced with trouble.
a. True b. False
6. Ostriches feed mainly on _____, but will also eat insects and small animals.
a. plants b. worms c. fish d. seeds

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Ostriches lay the largest _____ of any living bird.
8. Males _____ the eggs during the day.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If an ostrich can run 60 km/h, how far can it run in 10 minutes?
10. If an ostrich was 2.5 m. tall, how tall would a young ostrich $\frac{1}{5}$ that size be?