

Teaching Guide to *Shortcuts* by Jeff Harris

Introduction

Shortcuts by Jeff Harris is a beautifully illustrated and steered, 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: WHAT'S UP WITH THE WANDERING ALBATROSS

For release the week of: June 18, 2012

Objective: After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding of the wandering albatross.

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

- Wingspan comparison
- Behavior
- Habitat

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. Do albatrosses fly alone or in flocks?
2. Where do they sleep?

Activity Ideas

- If albatrosses have the widest wingspan of any bird, how do other wingspans compare? Research the size of other birds and make a chart comparing their wingspans.
- What does a real albatross look like? How does it fly? How/what does it eat? Watch this or other Internet videos to observe their behavior in nature.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUS8uQnx1VA&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PL601A979BB0AFF4A9

Use the News

- Albatrosses fly for most of their lives. They are like tourists of the Southern Hemisphere. What is one place you'd like to visit in the Southern Hemisphere? Research it and write a travel article about it. What sights would you see? What are the people like? What is the food like? What would you see across the landscape?

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) c, 3.) a, 4.) d, 5.) a, 6.) b, 7.) seawater, 8.) flight 9.) 72 kg, 10.) 65 miles.

Quick Quiz — The Wandering Albatross

1. Most species of albatross live in the Northern Hemisphere of our planet.
a. True b. False
2. Long ago, many sailors believed it was bad luck to _____ an albatross.
a. follow b. capture c. harm d. feed
3. Wandering albatrosses grow lighter in color as they age.
a. True b. False
4. Albatrosses usually return to dry land _____ when it's time to mate or breed.
a. weekly or b. monthly or c. yearly or d. only
5. A young albatross may travel for several years without ever visiting dry land.
a. True b. False
6. Some wandering albatrosses have wingspans more than _____ across.
a. 5 m b. 11 ft c. 20 ft d. 25 ft

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Like many other seabirds, albatrosses are able to drink _____.
8. It is difficult for an albatross to launch into _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. How much would a group of 6 albatrosses weigh if each weighed 12 kg?
10. If an albatross flew 13 miles an hour for 5 hours, how far would it have flown?