

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 NIGHT AT THE OPERA

For release the week of: July 9, 2012

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

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

- Rock opera
- Opera stories
- Famous arias

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. Is there such a thing as a “rock opera?”
2. Try these cartoon opera videos for fun:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbCJDxpQQvA&feature=related>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCyyiYDAU3E>

Activity Ideas

- What are the stories of the famous operas? What is "The Magic Flute" about? Who are the main characters? What is the plot and climax of the opera? Choose a famous opera and research the story. Then write a brief summary of it.
- What are your favorite arias? You may not be familiar with any! Try researching and listening to some. Then get in small groups and share them. Decide which you like best, and then share each group's favorite with the class. Is there a class favorite? What is special about it?

Use the News

- Opera, rock, country, orchestral, etc. there are many types of music that are performed in cities around the world. What is available in your area? Read the news and report on what types of music you can find. How many different types are there?

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) a, 3.) b, 4.) c, 5.) a, 6.) c , 7.) comical, 8.) recitative 9.) 38 , 10.) \$132

Quick Quiz — Opera

1. An aria is an emotional solo.
a. True b. False
2. "The Marriage of Figaro" was written by _____.
a. Mozart b. Copland c. Verdi d. Wagner
3. The first operas were performed in France.
a. True b. False
4. The written text of an opera is called the _____.
a. repertoire b. aria c. libretto d. buffa
5. The first 150 years of opera are often referred to as the Baroque period.
a. True b. False
6. For women, the highest voice range is called _____.
a. contralto b. tenor c. soprano d. mezzo-soprano

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. A _____ opera is called an "opera buffa."
8. A _____ is when a performer sings an explanation of what has happened.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If a 76-minute opera is half over, how many minutes are left?
10. If an opera ticket costs \$44, how many would 3 cost?