

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: GRAPPLING WITH GRAPES

For release the week of: November 12, 2012

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

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

- Charting grape production
- Are grapes healthy?
- Making grape jam/jelly

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. If a grape is a “berry,” what is the definition of a “berry”?
2. What is the largest type of grapes? Where do they grow?

Activity Ideas

- Are grapes healthy? What do grapes have that makes them healthy to eat? Research and write a brief description of the benefits of eating grapes. Is it true also about raisins? Why?
- Grapes are often made into jelly. How is this done? Have you ever made some? Do some research to discover the jelly-making process. Maybe your class could bring the ingredients to school and practice following directions and measuring amounts to make your own grape jelly or jam.

Use the News

- If a country produced one million tons of grapes in one year, with $\frac{2}{3}$ made into wine and $\frac{1}{3}$ sold as fresh fruit, what would a pie chart with these figures look like? Create a chart you might see in a news article about grape production.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) a, 3.) b, 4.) d, 5.) a, 6.) c , 7.) trellis, 8.) Dried, 9.) 200, 10.) 8

Quick Quiz — Grapes

1. A grape is a berry.
a. True b. False

2. Most grape jelly is made from _____ grapes.
a. Concord b. Cabernet c. Merlot d. Chardonnay
3. Wine grapes are usually much larger than grapes for eating.
a. True b. False
4. Nearly all of the grapes grown in the world are species that were originally from _____.
a. China b. America c. Chile d. Europe
5. Most grapes are grown to eat as fresh fruit.
a. True b. False
6. _____ produces more grapes than any other country.
a. Canada b. France c. Italy d. America

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Grapevines are usually grown on a support called a _____.
8. _____ grapes are called raisins, sultanas, or currants.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If one grapevine produces 25 kg. of grapes, how many kgs. would 8 grapevines produce?
10. If one grape is about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long, how many would it take to equal a length of 6 inches?