

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 LITTLE LOOK AT THE WALRUS

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

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

- Walrus behavior
- How does a walrus eat?
- Comparing walruses and seals

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. Are walruses dangerous to people?
2. Is there a leader in a herd of walruses?

Activity Ideas

- A walrus's favorite food seems to be clams. How does a walrus eat a clam? Does it open it, crack it or eat the whole thing? Search for a video about their eating behavior, and then write a description of what you see.
- How do you tell the difference between walruses, seals, sea lions and elephant seals? Make a comparison chart or diagram showing the differences you discover after you research them.

Use the News

- Have some fun with a news article by changing some of the words. First, choose a short article or a few paragraphs from a longer one. Then change some and see how funny or strange it becomes. For example, “The police arrested a *man* who was a suspect in a bank robbery” - changed to “The police arrested a *billy goat* who was a suspect in a bank robbery.” Another version of this activity could be to ask each other for words to replace them without telling them what the article is about (ie. Mad Libs)

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) c, 3.) a, 4.) b, 5.) b, 6.) b , 7.) pinnipeds, 8.) blubber, 9.) 1/3, 10.) 1235 kg

Quick Quiz — Walruses

1. Walruses live in the Antarctic.
a. True b. False
2. Wild walruses may live as long as ____ years.
a. 10 b. 20 c. 40 d. 80
3. Both male and female walruses have tusks.
a. True b. False
4. An adult male walrus can grow to be more nearly ____ long.
a. 2 m b. 4 m c. 6 m d. 10 m
5. Walruses usually like to live alone or just with a mate.
a. True b. False
6. A walrus can hold its breath for nearly ____ minutes.
a. 5 b. 15 c. 30 d. 60

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Walruses, along with seals and sea lions, belong to a group of animals called _____.
8. Walruses have a layer of _____ that is nearly 15 cm (6 in.) thick in some areas.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. What fraction of a 90-cm tusk is 30 cm?
10. How much lighter is a 65-kg calf than a 1300-kg adult walrus?