

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 Newspaper

Designed to have students use the newspaper 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 Newspaper: 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: DISCOVERING DUCKS

For release the week of: September 30, 2013

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

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

- Duck migration and flight
- Duck breeds
- Caring for ducks

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. How far do ducks fly before they have to land and rest?
2. How fast do ducks fly when they migrate?

Activity Ideas

- Could you tell a mallard duck from a pekin duck? What does a runner duck look like? Use an online source to cut and paste duck images into a document. Then arrange them in the form of a “matching” quiz with their breed name. Include an answer key on a separate page.
- Some people raise ducks for their eggs, just like people raise chickens. How do they do that? What special care do ducks need? Research and report on how to raise and care for ducks.

Use the Newspaper

- ❖ Use the news to analyze how reporters use words. Ducks waddle, quack, peck, paddle and fly. These are action words or verbs. Make a list of all the verbs you read in the newspaper. Are they interesting or boring words? Can you think of better replacements?

Answers to the Quiz

- 1.) b, 2.) b, 3.) a, 4.) c, 5.) b, 6.) a, 7.) down, 8.) oil, 9.) 250 ft, 10.) 6

Quick Quiz – Ducks

1. Ducks waddle because they have heavy bodies for their short legs.
a. True b. False
2. Scientists divide ducks into _____ “tribes,” or groups.
a. 4 b. 8
c. 15 d. 28
3. Ducks have legs located on the sides of their body.
a. True b. False
4. A male duck is called a “_____.”
a. bull b. rake
c. drake d. duck
5. Antarctic ducks migrate thousands of miles every year.
a. True b. False
6. Nearly all domestic ducks were originally bred from wild _____.
a. mallards b. loons
c. pekin d. geese

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Ducks have an insulating inner layer of feathers called _____.
8. Ducks waterproof their feathers by rubbing them with a waxy _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If a duck dives 330 ft., then rises 80 ft., what depth is it at?
10. If a duck lays about 5 eggs every week, how many weeks will it take to lay 30 eggs?