

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: A CENSUS OF THE CITY

For release the week of: October 7, 2013

Objective: After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding about cities.

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

- Underground cities
- Living in crowded cities
- Managing a city

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. What is the fastest-growing city in the world?
2. We often marvel at the world's tallest buildings, but did you know that there are amazing underground cities? Check out this link and do some further research on your own.
<http://listverse.com/2013/01/22/10-amazing-underground-cities/>

Activity Ideas

- What would it be like to live in one of the world's largest cities? How many people live there? What is the transportation like? Do most people drive cars, walk, take trains, buses, etc.? Choose one of the world's largest cities to research and report on. Focus on living conditions and lifestyle. Pictures and videos could also be included for the report or presentation.
- Can you build and manage your own city? Here's an online game to get an idea what city "management" is all about. <http://www.a10.com/puzzle-games/sim-city-online>

Use the Newspaper

- ❖ What is happening in your city? Are any new construction projects underway? New roads or public buildings? Is the mayor or the city councilors in the news? Read the local news to discover the current events in your city. Share what you find with the class.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) a, 3.) b, 4.) d, 5.) a, 6.) b, 7.) disease, 8.) metropolitan, 9.) 97.5%, 10.) 10

Quick Quiz — Cities

1. The first cities probably appeared in the early 1700s during the Industrial Revolution.
a. True b. False
2. Many ancient cities were surrounded by _____.
a. walls b. windows
c. deserts d. train tracks
3. Even 200 years ago, most people lived in or near cities.
a. True b. False
4. Hundreds of years ago, _____ were usually the tallest and most elaborate buildings in a city.
a. city halls b. prisons
c. libraries d. houses of worship
5. Many people moved from farms to cities during the Industrial Revolution.
a. True b. False
6. The first cities appeared about 5,500 years ago in what is now called _____.
a. Japan b. Iraq
c. Russia d. Mexico

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Hundreds of years ago, cities were unsanitary and many people died from _____.
8. A city, its suburbs and surrounding developed region are called a _____ area.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If only 2.5 % of people lived in a city years ago, what percent lived in rural farm areas?
10. If New York City has about 10,000 residents per square kilometer, and there are 1,000 square meters in a square kilometer, how many people would be in each square meter?
The answer is shocking, but remember, much of NYC is high-rise buildings.