

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: MINGLING WITH MOOSE

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

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

- Moose sounds
- Underwater moose activities
- Comparing antlers and horns

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 long can a moose hold its breath?
2. What does a moose sound like?

Activity Ideas

- Moose love to eat aquatic plants, but sometimes the plants are quite deep. The moose don't seem to mind diving underwater to dine! Here's a video of a moose having an underwater snack. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlQRp7Ys7NU> You may be able to find more on the Internet.
- Moose antlers are very different than sheep horns, not only in appearance, but in what they're made of and how they grow. Do sheep or cows shed their horns every year? Research and report on the differences between horns and antlers.

Use the News

- Which comic strip is your favorite in the newspaper? Read the comics and choose one to do a little “re-writing” on. How could you introduce a moose into the comic? What would the main character do? What would they say? What would the moose do or say? Share some ideas with a friend, if you need some inspiration, and then draw your own comic strip with a moose in it!

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) b, 3.) b, 4.) c, 5.) b, 6.) d , 7.) bell, 8.) deer, 9.) 99 lbs, 10.) 100 cm

Quick Quiz — Moose

1. Only male moose have antlers.
a. True b. False
2. The name “moose” comes from the Native American word for “_____ - eater.”
a. man b. twig c. leaf d. fish
3. Moose prefer to live in small herds.
a. True b. False
4. Moose shed their antlers every _____.
a. month b. fall c. winter d. spring
5. Moose have long legs, but small hooves.
a. True b. False
6. The largest type of moose can grow over 10 _____ tall.
a. meters b. inches c. centimeters d. feet

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Moose have a flap of skin called a _____ that hangs below their throat.
8. Moose are the largest members of the _____ family.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If a moose ate 33 pounds of food for 3 days, how many pounds would that be in total?
10. If a moose's antlers were 2 m wide, how many centimeters would half of that be?