

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: GETTING ALONG WITH GUINEA PIGS

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

Subject Areas: The following information regarding guinea pigs will be discussed:

- What do guinea pigs eat?
- How to care for guinea pigs.
- Guinea pig art

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. Which are more popular pets: guinea pigs, hamsters, or rabbits?

2. What do pet guinea pigs eat? What do wild guinea pigs eat?

Activity Ideas

- Guinea pigs are just one of the many pets people keep. How much does it cost to care for them? Pick a pet to research. Brainstorm a list of supplies, cages, food, etc you need. Next, visit/call a pet store, or use the Internet to find the cost of each item. Compare the necessities and costs of each pet your classmates investigate.
- Do some guinea pig artwork. Choose a medium such as watercolor, pencil crayon, or pastels. Find a model, such as a real guinea pig or a picture in a book or online. Draw your own version of the picture or make a “close-up” of just the “face.” How cute is that?

Use the News

Guinea pigs are cute little fuzzy creatures. Can you create a comic strip about one or more of these furry fellows? It could be a single or multi-frame comic.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) b, 3.) b, 4.) a, 5.) a, 6.) d, 7.) pups, 8.) cavy, 9.) 72, 10.) 4

Quick Quiz — Guinea pigs

1. Guinea pigs are silent animals.
a. True b. False
2. Guinea pigs are native to _____.
a. N. America b. S. America c. Guinea d. Africa
3. Pet guinea pigs are not usually awake during the day.
a. True b. False
4. Guinea pigs are _____.
a. mammals b. reptiles c. arachnids d. pigs

5. Guinea pigs are not really pigs.

a. True b. False

6. Guinea pigs need to eat foods that contain vitamin _____ or they will become sick.

a. A b. B c. C d. D

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Baby guinea pigs are called _____.

8. Another name for a guinea pig is _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. Four groups of 18 guinea pigs are how many animals?

10. One-tenth of 40 guinea pigs is how many?