

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: PAVING THE WAY FOR ROADS

For release the week of: September 7, 2009

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

Subject Areas: The following information regarding roads will be discussed:

- Finding your way on a road map
- Alaskan Highway road conditions
- Road extremes

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. Road extremes: highest road, longest, lowest, etc. Research and record your information.
2. What is a “cobblestone” road?

Activity Ideas

- Bring maps of your city to class, and learn how to navigate your way to various locations. You could start with finding your way on the map from home to school. Then challenge each other to get to other locations. Record which roads to take, which direction, etc.
- The Alaskan Highway stretches from Canada to Alaska through both frozen and boggy terrain. Learn how early builders of this road dealt with the harsh land conditions by viewing this interactive diagram:
<http://www.teachersdomain.org/resource/ess05.sci.ess.earthsys.road/> Identify these terms on the webpage and define them: permafrost, muskeg, bog, corduroy road.

Use the News

Roads in cities are named or numbered for easy identification. Addresses are given to identify a specific location on a road. Read the newspaper and identify roads and addresses of current events. Then use a map to visualize where the activity took place.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) c, 3.) a, 4.) d, 5.) b, 6.) c, 7.) Way, 8.) Plank, 9.) 10,560, 10.) 9 miles

Quick Quiz — Roads

- The Inca Indians constructed many ancient roads in Africa.
a. True b. False
- Roman roads were some of the first to put a _____ in the middle of the road to move water to the sides.
a. gutter b. solid line c. crown d. curb
- The first roads were probably made by animals.
a. True b. False
- The Autobahn, an advanced highway system of the 1930s, was built in _____.
a. America b. Sweden c. Spain d. Germany
- McAdam, of Scotland, developed the cobblestone road using large stones to walk on.
a. True b. False
- The word “turnpike” comes from a method long ago used to collect _____.

a. stones b. pikes c. tolls d. passengers

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. The “Appian _____” is one of the most famous Roman roads.

8. _____ roads were built out of long pieces of wood laid side by side.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. How many feet are in a 2-mile road (5,280ft per mile)?

10. If you travel 2 miles per hour for $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours, how far will you travel?