

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: TAKING FLIGHT WITH BIRDS OF PREY

For release the week of: October 26, 2009

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

Subject Areas: The following information regarding birds of prey will be discussed:

- Birds of prey migration
- Specific species facts
- Comparison of birds of prey

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 kind of special wings do owls have?
2. Do any birds of prey migrate?

Activity Ideas

- Choose a specific bird of prey to research and report on. Create a written, oral, Web page, media presentation, etc. from your collected information. Be sure to include photos, videos, drawings or other visual materials to present your report.
- How do birds of prey differ? How are they the same? After you have collected information on many of them, create a comparison chart. Categories could include: weight, wingspan, flight speed, prey, habitat, are they endangered? Etc.

Use the News

As indicated in this Shortcuts edition, birds of prey are often used as symbols of strength, power and freedom. What examples of these symbols can you find in the newspaper? Ex. Philadelphia Eagles football team Find examples and share them, or create a collage.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) c, 3.) b, 4.) b 5.) b, 6.) a, 7.) pellet 8.) raptors, 9.) 2 miles, 10.) 2 ½ ft.

Quick Quiz — Birds of Prey

1. For most birds of prey, the females are larger and heavier than the males.
a. True b. False
2. The _____ of a bird of prey are called “talons.”
a. beaks b. feathers c. claws d. feet
3. The Andean condor is one of the smallest flying birds in the world.
a. True b. False
4. Eagles and vultures soar high in the sky with large, _____ wings.
a. pointed b. broad c. narrow d. furry
5. Blue jays are considered birds of prey.
a. True b. False
6. _____ birds that hunt and eat other animals are called birds of prey.
a. Carnivorous b. Herbivorous

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. After eating, birds of prey will cough up a _____ made of undigested material.
8. Birds of prey are sometimes called _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. How far will a falcon dive in one minute if it is diving at 120 mph?
10. If a vulture's wingspan is 5 feet, how long is one wing(half the wingspan)?