

# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 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: A REWARDING LOOK AT THE NOBEL PRIZE**

For release the week of: November 30, 2009

**Objective:** After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding of the Nobel Prize.

**Subject Areas:** The following information regarding the Nobel Prize will be discussed:

- The winners
- The prize-winning process
- *Possible* Nobel Prize activities in the news

**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 can you buy for \$1 million? Research and try to find one thing or service that costs approximately \$1 million.
2. Will the prize money ever run out?

## **Activity Ideas**

- The individuals listed in this edition of Shortcuts are just a few of the winners. Research who the others are and report on one of them. Which prize category did they win? When did they win it? What important work did they do? The reports could be oral, a poster, a Web page, PowerPoint, etc.
- How are the prizes awarded? How do they decide who should get them? What is the ceremony like? Go to the official Nobel Prize Web site to gather this information. Record at least five facts you learn upon visiting the Web site. <http://nobelprize.org/>

### Use the News

There are six categories of Nobel prizes: physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, peace and economics. How many of these categories can you find in related news articles in the newspaper? Ex. an author is interviewed -- literature, a politician works against war - - peace, etc. Make a list with details about the categories you identify.

## Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) d, 3.) b, 4.) d 5.) b, 6.) c 7.) December 8.) woman, 9.) \$600,000, 10.) 108

## Quick Quiz – The Nobel Prize

- Alfred Nobel could speak five different languages.  
a. True b. False
- The Nobel Prize winner receives a \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. gold medal b. diploma c. cash d. all of the above
- The Nobel Prize was first awarded in 1776.  
a. True b. False
- Marie Curie's \_\_\_\_\_ also won the Nobel Prize.  
a. son b. daughter c. husband d. both b and c
- Married couples are not allowed to win the prize.  
a. True b. False
- \_\_\_\_\_ has won the Noble Peace Prize three times.  
a. President Obama b. Marie Curie c. The Red Cross d. Green Peace

## Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Nobel Prizes are awarded in the month of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Marie Curie was the first \_\_\_\_\_ to win the Nobel Prize.

### **Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)**

9. If a prize winner spent \$400,000 of the \$1,000,000 how much would be left?
10. How many years ago was 1901?