

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 rodeos 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: SADDLE UP WITH RODEO

For release the week of: March 1, 2010

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

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

- Rodeo stars
- Watching a real rodeo
- Are rodeos cruel to animals?

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. Some people think rodeos are cruel to animals. What are the pros and cons on this issue?
Have a class debate!
2. How much money does a professional rodeo competitor make?

Activity Ideas

- There are many books about the rodeo and its stars, past and present. Do research at the library to find one you're interested in, read it, and write a book report about it. Here's a link to a reference guide about writing book reports:
<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbookreportelem.html>
- You need to see a rodeo to understand how it works. Being there is most effective, but movies and video clips can help. Check out videos online or rent a movie with the class.

Appropriate rodeo movies can be researched online. Here's a video about bull riding:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmxtHv6WpR0&NR=1&feature=fvwp>

Use the News

Bull riding is a very dangerous activity. Can you identify other dangerous activities reported in the newspaper? As you find them, share what they are with the class and what is dangerous about them.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) b, 3.) b, 4.) b, 5.) a, 6.) a 7.) bulldogging, 8.) surround, 9.) \$804, 10.) 7 or 8

Quick Quiz — Rodeos

- All four legs of a calf must be roped together in “calf roping.”
a. True b. False
- A barrel racer goes around _____ barrels.
a. 2. b. 3 c. 4 d. 6
- The American Humane Association endorses rodeo events.
a. True b. False
- A bull rider must hold on for _____ seconds.
a. 5 b. 8 c. 12 d. 20
- Long ago, rodeo rings were probably just wagons in a circle.
a. True b. False
- The most dangerous rodeo event is _____.
a. bull riding b. steer wrestling c. bareback bronc riding d. saddle bronc riding

Vocabulary Comprehension

- Steer wrestling is also called _____.
- The word “rodeo” comes from the Spanish word “rodear,” which means “to _____.”

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

- If a rider earns \$230, \$75, and \$499, how much did she make?
- How many 8-second rides would a rider have to do to equal as close to one minute as

possible?