

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: THE TRUTH ABOUT LIONS

For release the week of: March 15, 2010

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

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

- Lion behavior in the movies
- Predator/Prey relationship
- Lions as predators

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 is bigger, a lion or a tiger?
2. . Which parts of the movie “The Lion King” appear realistic? Watch the movie and identify them as you see them.

Activity Ideas

- What would happen if there were no predators? Lions are predators. Their prey consists of herd animals such as zebras. Research and report on the “predator-prey” relationship. Do they need each other? Why, or why not?
- List as many animals that are prey to lions as you can. Do some research if necessary. Finally, play this Predator/Prey quiz game to see how much you know about all various predators and their prey: <http://biology.about.com/od/gamesandquizzes/a/aa100308a.htm>
Here's another game that you can play in your classroom:
<http://www.uga.edu/srel/kidsdoscience/kidsdoscience-predator-game.htm>

Use the News

A newspaper is divided into several sections for different types of news. Entertainment, classified, editorials, and sports are just a few. Make a list of the sections in your paper. Then, write a news story title for each section that might be related to lions. ex. Sports - "The Lanigan Lions Won the Baseball Tournament."

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) a, 3.) a, 4.) a, 5.) a, 6.) b, 7.) eating, 8.) hunt, 9.) 35 kg, 10.) 1/21

Quick Quiz — Lions

1. Lions may sleep more than 20 hours per day.
a. True b. False
2. Lions live in groups called _____.
a. prides b. pods c. herds d. packs
3. A lion's mane gets darker as the lion ages.
a. True b. False
4. The male lion eats _____.
a. first b. last c. often d. little
5. Lions are very social animals, living in large groups.
a. True b. False
6. Wild lions usually eat about _____ per week.
a. once b. twice c. 5 times d. 7 times

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. It may take up to four hours for a pride of lions to finish _____.
8. Lionesses often _____ in groups.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If a captive lion ate 5 kg of meat a day for a week, how much will it have eaten?
10. If a pride consisted of one male and 21 female lions, what fraction of the pride is male?