

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 sources 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 TRUE COLORS OF CHAMELEONS

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

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

- Chameleons as pets
- Where in the world do chameleons live?
- Watching them capture 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. Chameleons change color for communication, to show fear or anger, and because of temperature change. How do humans change in these situations? (hint: blushing or getting pale)
2. Are chameleons good pets? How do you care for them?

Activity Ideas

- Chameleons originate from Africa, Madagascar, the Middle East, Southern Asia, Spain and Portugal. Use a photocopy of a world map to color and label these locations. Alternatively, students could trace a map from an atlas. Can you make any conclusions about the kind of habitat and climate chameleons appear to require for survival?
- Observe some videos of chameleons using their tongues to capture prey. Afterward, draw a sketch of something you saw. Here's one:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4vVcpZzE-M> There are many. View several and then draw a selected scene.

Use the News

What kind of funny situations could a chameleon get into? Create a newspaper comic strip about a chameleon. Remember, they change color to communicate, show emotion, and when the temperature changes.

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) d, 3.) b, 4.) d, 5.) a, 6.) a, 7.) body, 8.) tails, 9.) 71 cm, 10.) 50 cm

Quick Quiz — Chameleons

1. Chameleons have horns.
a. True b. False
2. A chameleon's eyes are covered with _____.
a. hair b. scales c. nothing d. skin
3. All chameleons can change color.
a. True b. False
4. Chameleons are found mostly in Africa and _____.
a. Peru b. Florida c. Japan d. Madagascar
5. A chameleon's tongue can be as long as its body.
a. True b. False
6. Chameleons depend on their sense of _____.
a. sight b. smell c. hearing d. touch

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. A chameleon's tongue is as long as its _____.
8. Chameleons have prehensile _____ that allow them to grasp objects.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. What's the difference in length between a 4 cm chameleon and a 75 cm chameleon?

10. If a chameleon was 25 cm long, and its tongue was as long as its body, what would its length be from tail to the tip of its extended tongue?