

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: SETTING SAIL WITH THE VIKINGS

For release the week of: April 12, 2010

Objective: After completing the exercises, students should have a better understanding about Vikings.

Subject Areas: The following information about vikings will be discussed:

- Viking raids
- General Viking facts
- Famous Vikings

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. Where did the Vikings raid the most?
2. Who was Eric the Red?

Activity Ideas

- Use information about the Vikings from this WOW and other sources, such as this Web site: <http://www.localhistories.org/viking.html> to create a crossword puzzle or word search.
- Learn about Viking raids by playing a history game online. Check out this Web site and see who is the greatest Viking warrior in your class!
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/vikings/launch_gms_viking_quest.shtml

Use the News

Write an “ancient” news report about a Viking raid. Imagine what a reporter could write about in a newspaper when researching a village that was plundered. What year did it happen? Where? What happened?

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) d, 3.) b, 4.) a, 5.) a, 6.) c, 7.) runes, 8.) viking, 9.) 15, 10.) 30

Quick Quiz — Vikings

1. Most Vikings were farmers and merchants.
a. True b. False
2. Viking communities were governed by a group of men called a _____.
a. parliament b. congress c. gathering d. thing
3. Many Viking helmets were made of metal and had horns.
a. True b. False
4. Viking ships included a _____ running down the bottom center.
a. keel b. sail c. propeller d. wheel
5. Vikings landed in North America before Christopher Columbus.
a. True b. False
6. Wednesday and Thursday are named after Viking _____.
a. ships b. warriors c. gods d. holidays

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. The Viking written language used characters called _____.
8. For the Norsemen, the phrase "to go a-_____" meant to go plundering .

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. If there were 31 Vikings in a ship with one at the stern and the rest divided equally on the sides, how many would be on one side?
10. If 120 pieces of silver were divided equally between 4 Vikings, how much would each get?