

# 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 WELL-ROUNDED LOOK AT THE VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE**

For release the week of: April 19, 2010

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

**Subject Areas:** The following information regarding the Volkswagen Beetle will be discussed:

- Cost
- Classic and new Beetle differences
- Mileage

**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. Why was the Beetle so popular?
2. How much did the original Beetle cost? How much does the new Beetle cost?

## **Activity Ideas**

- How does the classic VW Beetle and the new VW Beetle differ? Research and report on the similarities and differences.
- How good is the gas mileage on the classic Beetle? What is considered “good” today? Make a gasoline mileage chart comparing various cars of your choice. Include large cars and small cars, old cars and new cars. etc.

## Use the News

Can you find an old VW Beetle for sale in the newspaper? How about a new Beetle? What other types of Volkswagen cars are for sale? Read the classified section of the newspaper.

# Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) a, 3.) a, 4.) c, 5.) a, 6.) b, 7.) Beetle, 8.) people's, 9.) 132 miles, 10.) 165

## Quick Quiz — Volkswagen Beetle

1. The early versions of the Beetle were able to float.  
a. True b. False
2. The last original versions of the Beetle were produced in \_\_\_\_\_ in 2003.  
a. Mexico b. Germany c. America d. Canada
3. The original concept of the Beetle painted it as the “people's car.”  
a. True b. False
4. In the early 1930s, the German government asked automobile designer \_\_\_\_\_ to design an affordable car.  
a. Ford b. Audi c. Porsche d. Ferrari
5. The Volkswagen Beetle could fit two adults and three children.  
a. True b. False
6. More than 21 million Beetles were produced, which easily surpassed the previous record of 15 million set by the \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Corvette b. Ford Model T c. Porsche Boxer d. Ferrari

## Vocabulary Comprehension

7. The nickname \_\_\_\_\_ was first used in the early 1950s.
8. “Volkswagen” means “\_\_\_\_\_” car.

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

9. If a car can travel 33 miles per gallon of gas, how far can it travel on 4 gallons?

10. How far will a car go in 3 hours if it travels at a speed of 55 miles per hour?