

# 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: GOING WITH THE FLOW OF SWAMPS**

For release the week of: May 10, 2010

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

**Subject Areas:** The following information regarding swamps will be discussed:

- Swamps around the world
- How does a swamp filter water?
- Plants and animals that live in swamps

**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 are swamps in the U.S. located? Where are others around the world? Find them on a map.
2. What videos can you find about swamps and mangrove forests?

## **Activity Ideas**

- A swamp is a type of “wetland.” How are wetlands beneficial to us and to the environment? How does a swamp filter pollutants out of the water? Why doesn't a river filter water the same? Research and explain the benefits. Here's a website with most of the information: <http://www.ctic.purdue.edu/KYW/Brochures/Wetlands.html>
- What plants and animals live in a swamp? Research and report on one animal and one plant that live in a swamp habitat.

**Use the News**

Swamps help clean up ground water. Often, humans need to clean up the Earth's water, land, and air. What newspaper articles deal with environmental cleanup? Identify and share them with the class. Discuss what could be done as a preventative measure so the cleanup doesn't have to be done in the future.

## Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) c, 3.) a, 4.) b, 5.) a, 6.) d, 7.) roots, 8.) nutrients, 9.) 63, 10.) 32

## Quick Quiz — Swamps

1. Mangroves tend to pollute the water.  
a. True b. False
2. Mangrove forests \_\_\_\_\_ the shoreline.  
a. destroy b. move c. protect d. change
3. Mangroves live in saltwater swamps.  
a. True b. False
4. One of the largest swamps in the world is in \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Russia b. Brazil c. Canada d. Spain
5. Swamps are usually found along slow-moving water.  
a. True b. False
6. A swamp is a partially \_\_\_\_\_ area.  
a. raised b. dry c. frozen d. flooded

## Vocabulary Comprehension

7. Some wetland plants have special \_\_\_\_\_ called pneumatophores..
8. Only certain types of plants can survive in a swamp, because the soil does not have the \_\_\_\_\_ most plants need to survive.

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

9. If a swamp covers a rectangular area roughly 9 km long and 7 km wide, how many square km is the total area of the swamp?
10. If 64 fish eggs are left in a swamp, but only 50% of them survived and hatched, how many baby fish would that be?