

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: Spending the Day with Knights

For release the week of: July 5, 2010

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

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

- Tilting or jousting
- How to make chain mail
- Chivalry

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. Take a look at real jousting recreated in modern times:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9u35ZUtNmzU&feature=related>
2. What are some of the famous stories or books about knights? Ask a librarian.

Activity Ideas

- Making real chain mail armor was a time-consuming task. Some people still do it for artistic and historical reasons. Making your own small piece can be fun, and will give you an idea on how good these craftspeople have to be. Look through these two websites for instructions on how to make it. Then decide which method and what materials would be suitable for your class. <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Chainmail>
<http://www.historyforkids.org/crafts/projects/chainmail.htm> You could make a large scale model of chain mail by using pipe cleaner wire to make large 1 or even 2 inch rings that can easily be twisted into closed circles. Tools may not even be needed to form pipe cleaner chain mail.

- Knights were required to follow a code of “chivalry”; honesty, loyalty, and bravery were some of the traits that were expected. What traits should a good student in your classroom display? Make a code of chivalry for your class to follow. Small groups could make their own codes, and then share and combine them into a class “code.”

Use the News

What modern-day knights are written about in the newspaper? Who are the people that keep us safe? Discuss this as a class and make a list. Who are they and do they have a code of conduct?

Answers to the Quiz

1.) b, 2.) c 3.) b, 4.) b, 5.) b, 6.) d 7.) Middle, 8.) chivalry 9.) 487, 10.) 150 lbs

Quick Quiz – Knights

- Armor was easy to make and not very expensive.
a. True b. False
- A _____ was the youngest of the knights in training.
a. noble b. squire c. page d. rook
- Knights in full armor could not get on a horse by themselves.
a. True b. False
- In Germany, a knight was referred to as a _____.
a. samurai b. ritter c. chevalier d. squire
- Chain mail was better protection than plate armor.
a. True b. False
- _____ was a competition using lances.
a. Linting b. Leaning c. Chess d. Tilting

Vocabulary Comprehension

- During the _____ Ages, all the land was owned by kings, lords and other nobles.
- Knights followed a code of _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

- If a knight owned 500 pieces of gold and lost 13 pieces in a tournament, how much

would he still have?

10. What's the difference in weight between a 200-pound knight and his 50-pound armor?