

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 Newspaper

Designed to have students use the newspaper 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 Newspaper: 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: UNTANGLING THE WORLD OF PUPPETS

For release the week of: November 14, 2005

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

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

- Types of puppets
- History of puppetry
- Making puppets

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 are puppets “allowed” to say things a real person might be embarrassed to say (such as teasing the president or joking about your teacher)?
2. How could puppets be used to educate students? Think of a simple plan and use it help a lower grade than your own.

Activity Ideas

- Here are a series of free puppet play scripts from author Aaron Shepard your class can use to put on your own show.
<http://www.aaronshp.com/rt/RTE.html> This second Web link is a huge site with tons of information about how to create any kind of puppet you can think of! Write your own short play and create some puppets to go with it or use the above website for some ready made scripts.
<http://www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/>
- Who are the famous puppets of the world and through history? Do some research and draw a poster of your chosen famous puppet. Include a brief summary of who the puppet is, when it was famous, where it was from, etc.

Use the Newspaper

- ❖ Choose a comic strip from the newspaper to make a short puppet play from. The puppets could be elaborate papier-mache puppets or simple paper cutouts from the newspaper itself (the characters could be glued to popsicle sticks).

Answers to the Quiz

1.) a, 2.) d, 3.) b, 4.) b, 5.) a, 6.) a, 7.) marionette, 8.) puppeteer, 9.) 115 inches,
10.) 21 ounces.

Quick Quiz – Puppets

1. Puppets have been used in religious ceremonies.
a. True b. False
2. Banraku is a type of puppet theatre popular in _____.
a. Russia b. Canada
c. India d. Japan
3. The term “muppet” is a combination of the words marionette and puppet.
a. True b. False
4. The most common type of puppet is the _____ puppet.
a. shadow b. hand
c. marionette d. finger
5. Several people control a Banraku puppet.
a. True b. False
6. Pulcinella was a popular _____ puppet.
a. Italian b. Chinese
c. Egyptian d. French

Vocabulary Comprehension

7. A _____ is a type of puppet controlled by strings.
8. A person who uses a puppet is called a _____.

Math Comprehension (subtraction, division, addition, fractions)

9. How long a piece of string would you need to cut into five equal 23 inch pieces?
10. If 3 ounces of paint cover one puppet head, how much would you need to paint 7 puppets?