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Buffalo Hunt

Resources

To enhance this study for your students, the following resources are recommended:

Videos

Adventures from the Book of Virtues, PBS Videos
This video series contains entertaining children's stories to teach virtues such as honesty, responsibility, courage, etc. Though they don't actually have anything to do with Indians or buffalos, one of the main characters in each video is a wise, cartoon buffalo named Plato who finds stories to help answer children's questions.

Dances with Wolves, Orion Home Video
About halfway through this excellent film (about an hour and 10 minutes along) is an exciting buffalo hunt segment. The depiction is not bloody or gruesome, but you'll want to stop the video before the last scene in the segment which shows a hunter cutting out the buffalo's heart and eating it.

Land of the Eagle, PBS Video
"Across the Sea of Grass"
About 15 minutes into this video is an interesting 15-minute segment about the buffalo.

The West, PBS Video
Episode 5, "The Grandest Enterprise Under God"
Near the end of this first segment is a three-minute scene showing the dependence of the Native Americans on the buffalo. Be sure to stop the tape as soon as the buffalo part is over as it is followed by a gory scene of a man murdered by Indians.

Web Sites

www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/mammals/bison
Have students check out this web site for information and a sketch of the buffalo's physical characteristics.

www.monterey.k12.ca.us~drey/buff.htm
Students will enjoy looking at this amazing list of ways Native Americans used the buffalo.

www.nwf.org/bufalo/buffalo-box.html
This site tells you how to obtain a box of buffalo artifacts, information, videos, puzzles and more from the National Wildlife Federation for your classroom, and it's free!

wildlife.visitmt.com

www.nabisoncoop.com



Buffalo Hunt

The American Buffalo

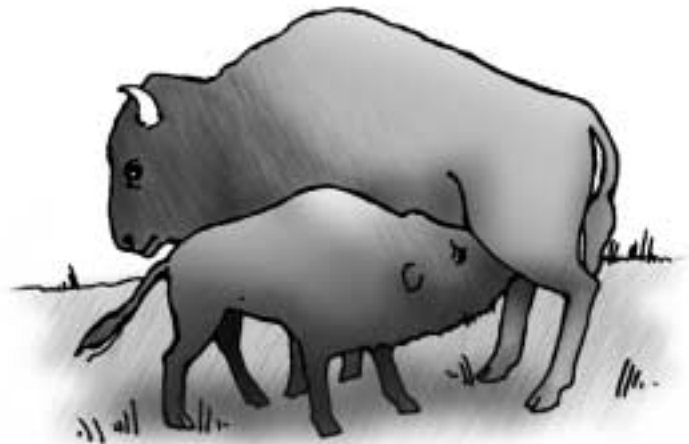
The animal we usually refer to as the buffalo is more correctly called the American bison. It's an impressive animal, the largest plant-eating animal in North America. Males can weigh up to a ton. Females usually weigh about 1000 to 1200 pounds. The largest buffalo are from five to six feet tall at the shoulder, which is raised in a large hump. They are often 10 to 12 feet long from nose to tail. The hair on their head, neck, shoulders and front legs is long and shaggy. The buffalo's forehead is quite broad and has a short, slightly curved horn on each side. The horns may be used as weapons against wolves, coyotes or even each other; but are more often used to tear up prairie grass to make a dust wallow.

The buffalo are not animals to take for granted since they are unpredictable and have been known to charge cars and trucks. Don't imagine they are slow moving because of their size. On the contrary, they can run at more than 30 miles an hour for short distances. Buffalo usually travel in herds except for the older males who stay to themselves and join the herd only at breeding time when they fight with younger males for breeding rights. The bulls' roars and bellows can be heard for great distances. Each herd of buffalo may contain several families which include a bull, a cow and her offspring. The cow is the leader of the family group, and an old cow is usually the leader of the herd. Cows also serve as guards.

Mating season is from July to September. The male buffalos in the herd fight each other for breeding rights, but there is no "head bull" who does all the breeding as with some other groups of animals. A female buffalo is pregnant for about nine months so that calves are usually born from April to June. When it's time for her to give birth to her calf, the cow leaves the herd. When the calf is able to walk, usually about four days old, the two return to the herd. Calves usually stay with their mothers about three years.

The buffalo's diet is made up almost entirely of grass. For this reason, they move around with the seasons to find the best feeding areas. Like cattle, buffalo chew their cud. They are most active in the morning and evening. They love to wallow in dust and mud (which helps get rid of biting insects) and rub up against trees and boulders (which is sometimes a bit hard on the trees and boulders).

According to the North American Bison Cooperative there are about 350,000 buffalo in North America today. Some of these are in public herds such as in Yellowstone National Park and others are owned by private individuals. This is an amazing number when you consider that less than 120 years ago only 500 buffalo were left in America!



Buffalo Sack Puppets

Copy the buffalo head pattern on page 7 for each student to color and cut out. Have them follow directions for gluing the pattern on the bottom of a small paper lunch sack. Then let students use their buffalo puppets to act out the skit on page 8 and sing the song on page 9.

Buffalo Hunt

Name _____

Buffalo Puppet Pattern

1. Color and cut out the pattern below.
2. Color a small paper lunch sack brown.
3. Glue the buffalo pattern to the flat bottom of the sack.
4. Cut a large tongue from pink paper and glue it under the flat bottom of the sack.
5. Glue raffia or yarn to the puppet for hair, especially under the head to make the buffalo's beard.
6. Put your hand inside the bag to make the puppet talk.

