



Bison As Teachers



A collaborative project between the
Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Bison As Teachers

I. History of the Bison

Teacher and student resources referred to in this lesson are found on pages 4-8. Key terminology for this lesson is found in the glossary section on pages 17-18.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How did the interdependence between people and bison begin in Saskatchewan?

OUTCOMES

SOCIAL STUDIES

DR4.1

DR4.2

SCIENCE

HC4.1

HC4.2

SUPPLEMENTARY OUTCOMES

ELA

CR4.4

CC4.3

ARTS EDUCATION

CH4.2

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Knowledge of the migration pattern of bison in North America and specifically Saskatchewan (refer to Teacher Resource #1).
- Understanding of the social structure of the Métis bison hunt (see Teacher Resource #1 and #7).
- Understanding of the importance of the hunt (or modern day slaughter) to help sustain a herd and prevent disease (see Teacher Resource #5).

INSTRUCTIONAL OPTIONS

- Using a KWL chart, have students list the things they **know** about bison in North America. In the K column, under the W, have students list **what** they'd like to learn. After finding out more about bison, return to the questions students asked and record what they learned in the L column.
 - Share responses as a class and discuss.
- Key Questions: Discuss with a partner or small group.
Do you think people or bison were here first?
What makes you think that?
 - Share responses as a class and discuss.
- Show the maps (Teacher Resource #1) and discuss the migration of the bison making connections to Indigenous people and Saskatchewan.
- Discuss traditional bison hunting from the Métis perspective (laws of the hunt) and the First Nations perspective (bison jump/run) (see Teacher Resource #3).
Note: Introduce the topic of the importance of hunting/slaughtering to the sustainability (genetics) of the herd to help prevent disease (see Teacher Resource #5).
- Key Question:
How do you think the bison structure their herd?
(Connect this to what Métis and First Nation do for the hunt.)
 - Share responses as a class and discuss.
- Using the Venn diagram, as a class, compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the hunting social structure of people (Métis/First Nation) and bison social hierarchy.
- Key Question:
What do you think we can learn from bison?
 - Share responses as a class and discuss.
- Summarize discussion on the board with the key points:
 - a. Where do the bison come from?
 - b. Métis bison hunt and First Nation bison jumps/run.
 - c. Bison social hierarchy.
 - d. Make connections to things we can learn from bison.

STORYTELLING

Bison Truths with Kevin Wesaquate and Nyle Miigizi Johnston. Grades 3, 4 & 5

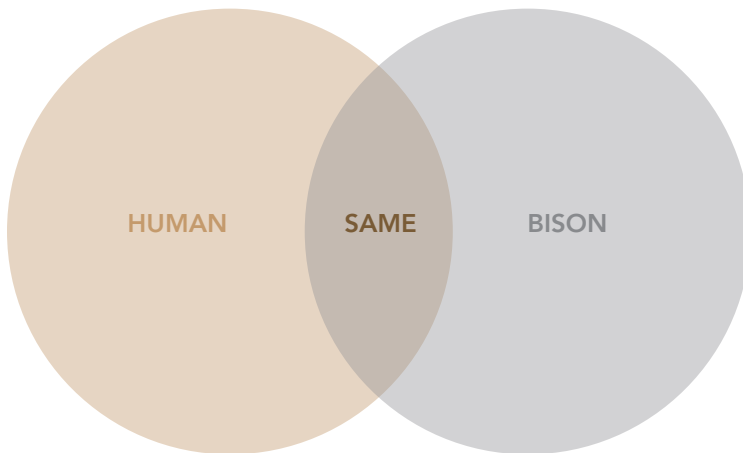
Series: LIVE Arts

Kevin and Nyle explore Indigenous stories and storytelling. Students write their own stories and use them as the basis for a visual artwork that combines text, image and colour.

<https://rover.edonline.sk.ca/en/rover/videos/3326>

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Qualities/Characteristics of Humans and Bison



MAPS/GRAPHICS

See maps in Teacher Resource #1.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

FORMATIVE

- Anecdotal records regarding discussions
- Venn diagram
- KWL chart

TEACHER RESOURCES

1. *Buffalo Nation: History and Legend of the North American Bison*

By Valerius Geist

The U.S. Government and its Army killed millions of buffalo as part of an all-out war against the Native Americans in the nineteenth century. The Plains Indians, who relied on the buffalo as a source of food and spiritual power, weakened and succumbed to the aggressors as the buffalo quickly disappeared from the prairies. *Buffalo Nation* tells the story of this brutal war and details the amazing comeback of the buffalo. The number of bison in the U.S. plummeted from more than thirty million in the early 1800s to fewer than 500 at the turn of the century. There are now more than 250,000 bison on ranches and sanctuaries across the nation. Valerius Geist also examines the natural history of the buffalo underscoring its importance in North America in this enlightening exploration that will appeal to history buffs, conservationists, wildlife enthusiasts and those concerned with Native American issues.

Geist, V. (1996). *Buffalo Nation: History and Legend of the North American Bison*. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers. ISBN: 1895618797.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000419024/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKLL510GWEDB149

2. **Buffalo Sacred and Sacrificed**

By Grant MacEwan

Europeans, on their arrival in the West, saw the buffalo as dull, sulky and of no benefit except to the Indians. Early governments believed the huge, free-ranging herds were an impediment to enforcement of newly signed treaties. Enterprising pioneers recognized buffalo hunts as first-class sporting events, sure to appeal to wealthy and upper-class Britishers and others overseas.

It was only when a remnant of this part of North America's natural history remained that the significance of the destruction became clear. In *Buffalo: Sacred and Sacrificed*, popular historian Grant MacEwan captures the efforts of early conservationists James McKay, Charles Alloway, Sam Bedson, Frank Oliver and Michel Pablo to preserve and protect this monarch of the Plains. It is a remarkable account of where the buffalo once roamed and of their amazing step back from the brink of extinction.

MacEwan, G. (2003). *Buffalo: Sacred & Sacrificed*. Markham, ON: Red Deer Press. ISBN: 978-0969935506.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Buffalo-Sacred-Sacrificed-Grant-MacEwan/dp/B00AJF5LWS>

https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/product/9780969935506-item.html?s_campaign=Google_BookSearch_organic

3. **Buffalo Sunrise: The Story of a North American Giant**

By Diane Swanson

In *Buffalo Sunrise: The Story of a North American Giant*, Diane Swanson introduces young readers to the world of the buffalo, sharing fascinating details about this remarkable animal. Readers will learn for example, that the buffalo is surprisingly agile, moving on tiptoe as it picks its way along narrow ledges, buffaloes sometimes go swimming just for fun, "Buffalo birds" warm their feet in the thick fur on a buffalo's back, and the birth of a white buffalo is considered a miraculous event. The buffalo nearly disappeared from our planet a hundred years ago but was saved just in time. The author includes factual information along with legends and anecdotes. Stunning full color photographs and archival images, combined with a lively writing style, will make *Buffalo Sunrise* a favorite with young readers.

Swanson, D. (1996). *Buffalo Sunrise: The Story of a North American Giant*. Vancouver, BC: Whitecap Books. ISBN: 9781552858585.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Buffalo-Sunrise-Story-North-American/dp/1552858588>

4. **Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities for Children**

By Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac

These traditional Native American stories, along with related activities, show parents and teachers how to teach children the importance of wildlife in Native American traditions. As the stories unfold and the activities come to life, the importance of our connections to animals became apparent.

Caduto, M. J. & Bruchac, J. (1997). *Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities for Children*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing. ISBN: 978155913861.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000838975/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKLL510GWEDB599

5. **Mackenzie Bison Management Plan: Government Northwest Territories**

By Mackenzie Bison Working Group

In 2010, the Government of the Northwest Territories released the Wood Bison Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories, which provides the long-term vision for the management of wood bison in the Northwest Territories.

The Mackenzie Bison Management Plan was drafted by Mackenzie Bison Working Group and is the shared vision of its members. The purpose of this plan is to provide direction for managing the Mackenzie wood bison population to help meet the goals of the Wood Bison Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories. This plan's goal is to manage the Mackenzie bison population to sustain its long-term viability while providing for social, economic and cultural connections to people. The MBWG identified five objectives that will need to be achieved in order to reach that goal and support the Strategy's goals.

https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/151_file.pdf

6. **Like Distant Thunder: Canada's Bison Conservatory Story**

By Lauren Markewicz

Like Distant Thunder is a genealogical history of the bison herds of Parks Canada. While much has been written about the history of bison and Indigenous peoples, the destruction of the great bison herds in the nineteenth century, and individual conservation herds, there are few works that speak of the Parks Canada bison conservation herds as a whole. The purpose of this document is to draw together these disparate threads to form a cohesive narrative of the bison herds managed by Canada.

https://pcacdn.azureedge.net/-/media/pn-np/ab/elkiland/WET4/pdf/like_distant_thunder.pdf

7. **The Métis: The Buffalo Hunt**

The buffalo hunt played an integral part in the development of the Métis Nation.

Buffalo hunting provided the Métis with a livelihood and helped sustain their way of life.

http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_metis/fp_metis8.html

STUDENT RESOURCES

1. **Bobbie Bison and the Seven Teachings**

By Achilles Gentle

This is part of the set of Seven Teaching Books published by Native Reflections. This is a great set to introduce young children to the Seven Teachings. Follow the adventures of Johnny, Sally, Tani, Bobbie, Bucky, Catcha and Folf as they all have fun in their own way. Each animal shows why they bring their own special teaching.

Gentle, A. (2013). *Bobbie Bison and the Seven Teachings*. Winnipeg, MB: Native Reflections. ISBN: 9781926896915.

<https://nativereflections.ca/products/bks-13>

2. **Buffalo Sacred and Sacrificed**

By Grant MacEwan

Europeans, on their arrival in the West, saw the buffalo as dull, sulky and of no benefit except to the Indians. Early governments believed the huge, free-ranging herds were an impediment to enforcement of newly signed treaties. Enterprising pioneers recognized buffalo hunts as first-class sporting events, sure to appeal to wealthy and upper-class Britishers and others overseas.

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<https://www.amazon.ca/Buffalo-Sacred-Sacrificed-Grant-MacEwan/dp/B00AJF5LWS>

https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/product/9780969935506-item.html?s_campaign=Google_BookSearch_organic

3. **Buffalo Song**

By Joseph Bruchac

This is the story of the first efforts to save the vanishing bison (buffalo) herds from extinction in the United States in the 1870s and 1880s. Based on the true story of Samuel Walking Coyote, a Salish (Kalispel) Indian who rescued and raised orphaned buffalo calves.

Bruchac, J. (2008). *Buffalo Song*. New York: Lee & Low Books Inc. ISBN: 9781584302803.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000755963/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMMD10OX5BY161

4. **Métis Camp Circle: A Bison Culture Way of Life**

By Leah Dorion

During much of the nineteenth century, bison hunting was integral to the Métis social, economic and political life. As "people of the buffalo," the Métis were bison hunters par excellence. The author transports young readers back in time when bison were the basis of Métis lifeways on the Plains.

Dorion, L. (2019). *Metis Camp Circle: A Bison Culture Way of Live = Li kaan roon di Michif : kaa kii paypimaatishiyahk avik lii bufloo*. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute. ISBN: 9781926795959.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000851465/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKM1T10RZA7V079

<https://rover.edonline.sk.ca/en/rover/videos/3310>

5. *People of the Buffalo: How the Plains Indians Lived*

By Maria Campbell

No other group in North America has been more romanticized and stereotyped than the Plains Indians, the Blackfoot, Plains Cree, Dakota, Kiowa and other grassland tribes. This book, with its authenticated drawings, tells how the Plains Indians lived: how they hunted buffalo, made their teepees, clothing and tools. It also explores their beliefs, ceremonies and feeling for family.

Campbell, M. (1976). *People of the Buffalo: How the Plains Indians Lived*. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books. ISBN: 0888940890.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000454765/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMJYJ0QE9E1174

6. *Saskatchewan Critters: Endangered and Extinct Creatures of Saskatchewan (DVD)*

By Canadian Geographic Kids Series

When Eldon sends Sid and Idee to look for wild Prairie Bison in Saskatchewan, our adventurers soon discover more than they bargained for. First, they visit Old Man on His Back, Saskatchewan, where a young herd of wild bison have been released to roam in their native grassland habitat for the first time in over 100 years! Then it's over to Grasslands National Park of Canada to witness the delicate balance of land and animals in action. Our adventurers check out an authentic Prairie Dog town. Next, Sid and Idee head over to the Eastend, where they join a dinosaur dig with young dinosaur enthusiasts and palaeontologist Tim Tokaryk, one of the team that discovered Saskatchewan's most famous and fearsome dinosaur, Scotty the T-Rex! Then they go back to the lab and see how fossils are prepared for the museum.

Canadian Geographic Kids (2008). *Saskatchewan Critters: Endangered and Extinct Creatures of Saskatchewan (DVD)*. New Westminster BC: Distribution Access.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000612842/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMMD10OX5BY773

7. *Seven Sacred Teachings of the White Buffalo Calf Woman = Niizhwaaswi aanike'iniwendiwin*

By David Bouchard

The Seven Sacred Teachings is a message of traditional values and hope for the future. The Teachings are universal to most First Nation peoples. There is a multilingual DVD in the back of the book.

Bouchard, D. (2010). *Seven Sacred Teachings of the White Buffalo Calf Woman: Niizhwaaswi aanike'iniwendiwin*. North Vancouver, BC: More Than Words Publishers. ISBN: 9780978432720.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000602462/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKLL510GWEDB072
http://www.btgwinnipeg.ca/uploads/5/2/4/1/52412159/the_seven_sacred_teachings_.pdf

II. Physical Uses of the Bison

Teacher resources referred to in this lesson are found on pages 11-12.

Key terminology for this lesson is found in the glossary on pages 17-18.

OUTCOMES

HC4.1

HC4.2

HC4.3

OUTCOMES FOR EXTENSION LESSONS

PE4.13

USC4.2

IN4.2

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(People in the World, 2001) (Teacher Information)

Long ago, the bison herds moved continuously to follow the availability of pasture (seasonal round). Consequently, the bison were spread over the entire Plains area of the North American continent and as a result, the First Nations people were widely dispersed and living in relative abundance. Each nation was divided into tribes and each tribe followed the seasonal cycle. As hunters and gatherers, they moved in regular patterns in search of food.

The bison was the dominant animal in the lives of First Nation people of the Plains. It fed and clothed them. The hide provided shelter, its hoofs and horns furnished tools, and its chips fueled their fires. The tradition of cooperative hunts and social gatherings in the late spring and early fall would bring together many First Nations people, after which they would disperse to follow smaller numbers of animals. To the hunters of the Plains, the bison symbolized generosity, for it offered itself for the survival of a people whose knowledge of its ways and habits led to skillful methods of hunting.

In the latter part of the 1800s, the First Nations people of the Plains experienced radical changes in their lifestyles. Many of these changes resulted from the near extinction of the bison herds. With the disappearance of the huge bison herds from the Plains, the First Nations peoples' livelihood and cultural patterns were totally disrupted.

Many pressures were exerted upon the herds during this time period. First Nations people such as the Cree, the Ojibway, the Assiniboine, the Sioux and the Nakota, as well as the Métis, began serving as provisioners for the forts and fur trading posts that had been established on the prairies. Other First Nations people became middlemen in the trade with the Europeans.

Until the establishment of inland posts, these middlemen controlled the amount of trade with the interior nations. These nations, although isolated from early contact, were not unaffected by the presence of traders. New technology was introduced into their cultures, the dwindling number of bison affected the amount of food readily available and European diseases devastated their populations.

Both Native and non-Native people hunted bison in increasing numbers to provide fresh meat for an increasing population. Pemmican (dried meat mixed with berries) was highly valued for its light weight and high nutritional value.

Over-hunting became a major factor in the decrease in the bison population. Large organized bison hunts also originated at various fur trade settlements. These hunters ranged far into the Central and Western Plains.

Another major pressure on the bison herds was the popularity of hides for robes and coats. This commercial enterprise developed mainly in what is now the United States where there existed an excellent transportation system along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. In what is now Canada, without a major means of transport, bison

hides were mainly utilized locally.

Changes in hunting technology such as the introduction of iron projectile points and guns also made bison hunting easier and more efficient.

By the 1800s, the pressures on the bison herds had resulted in such a drastic drop in the bison population that the herds were no longer able to replenish themselves. Consequently, the herds became smaller and smaller. By the 1860s, it was no longer possible for the First Nations people to survive as bison hunters.

ACCESSING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

K-W-H-L-A-Q Chart

K – What do I know?

W – What do I want to know?

H – How do I find out?

L – What have I learned?

A – What action will I take?

Q – What new questions do I have?

STORYTELLING

Bison Supermarket (Educational Kit) – People in Their World (Teacher Resource #3)

This might be when you choose to access Elders in your own community.

VIDEO

1. YouTube video – *Native Americans Use ALL of the Buffalo* (via History.com).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aKqjrgz92w>
2. YouTube video – *Native Americans Saw Buffalo as More Than Just Food* (Smithsonian Channel).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXvdMfyg2mQ>

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Compare and contrast traditional tools from the buffalo to what similar tools we use today using a t-chart.

Traditional tools created from the buffalo	Tools we use today with a similar function

WRITING AND TELLING PROMPTS

Read and response activities to any of the children's books listed under teacher resources.

TEACHER RESOURCES

1. **Bison**

By Melissa Gish

A look at bison, including their habitats, physical characteristics such as their shaggy coats, behaviors, relationships with humans, and threatened status in the world today.

Gish, M. (2012). *Bison*. Mankato, MN: Creative Paperbacks. ISBN: 9780898126693.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Living-Wild-Bison-Melissa-Gish/dp/089812669X>

2. **Bison Mystery Box (Activity Guide)**

By National Wildlife Federation

Students will investigate the many uses of bison in Native American culture. Grade levels: 4-8; K-3.

https://nieonline.com/downloads/national_wildlife/wildlife/bison_box

3. **Bison Supermarket (Educational Kit)**

By People in Their World

Contents: 4 books, 2 booklets, 2 small kits, 3 posters, 6 cards

People in Their World. (2004). *Bison Supermarket (Educational Kit)*. Saskatoon, SK.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000880944/Lang=En/BookBag=T8T7JEN10DW1W1071

4. **Buffalo Hunt**

By Russell Freedman

More than 30 paintings and drawings by artist-adventurers who traveled West in the 1800s illustrate Freedman's vivid account of the Great Plains Indians' buffalo hunts.

Freedman, R. (1988). *Buffalo Hunt*. New York: Holiday House. ISBN: 0823407020.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000485108/Lang=En/BookBag=T8T7KKE10MP83S116

5. **Honouring the Buffalo: A Plains Cree Legend**

By Judith Silverthorne and Ray Lavallee

This story, told in both English and Cree, describes how early First Nations people relied on the buffalo for food, clothing, shelter, hunting tools and other necessities of life. The narrator explains how the buffalo is honoured for its sacrifice. Pictures of items made from the buffalo, facts about the buffalo and questions to enrich the use of the text are included at the end of the book.

Silverthorne, J. & Lavallee, R. (2014). *Honouring the buffalo: A Plains Cree Legend = Ewako oṛna ohci paskwaṛi-mostos ka-kisteṛimiht : neḥiyaw-ačimowin*. Regina: Your Nickel's Worth Publishing. ISBN: 9781927756331.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000735338/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMD810DD14G084

6. **People of the Buffalo: How the Plains Indians Lived**

By Maria Campbell

This book gives information about the Plains Aboriginals and their language, beliefs and ceremonies, families, shelters, food, storage and utensils, clothing, transportation and warfare.

Campbell, M. (1976). *People of the Buffalo: How the Plains Indians Lived*. Buffalo NY: Firefly Books. ISBN: 0888940890.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000454765/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMJYJ0QE9E1174

7. **Graphic by South Dakota State Historical Society**

Graphic illustrating the parts of the buffalo.

<https://sd4history.sd.gov/Unit3/buffalouses.htm>

8. **The Legend of the Buffalo Stone**

By Dawn Sprung

The story centres on Hanata, a young Blackfoot girl who understands the importance of the buffalo for her peoples' survival. She not only helps to hunt the great animals, but also prepares the meat and skins and makes toys for the younger children using bison bones. She knows that without the buffalo, her people would lose their main source of food and shelter. Then a long winter descends on the land and the buffalo disappear. Hungry and desperate, Hanata goes on a quest in search of an iniskim, a stone shaped like a sleeping buffalo and possessed of powers that will make the buffalo return. After a long and dangerous journey with only basic supplies and courage in her heart, Hanata finds the stone and comes back to her village. She uses the iniskim to call buffalo and, sure enough, the animals return. Hanata and her people are saved.

Sprung, D. (2013). *The Legend of the Buffalo Stone*. Victoria, BC: Heritage House. ISBN: 9781927527412.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000710844/Lang=En/BookBag=T8T7LCO10611MK520

9. **What Can You Make from a Buffalo (Online Activity)**

An interactive matching game of what you can make from different parts of the buffalo.

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/buffalo/matching.html>

III. Characteristics of the Bison

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What are the physical characteristics and diet of a bison?

OUTCOMES

SCIENCE
HC4.2

ACCESSING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Inquiry questions to the students about their knowledge regarding physical characteristics of bison.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

3-Column Notes

SIZE AND WEIGHT	DIET	OTHER INFORMATION

MAPS OR GRAPHICS

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/american-bison/#/ap-american-bison-map.jpg>

TEACHER RESOURCES

1. *Animals of North America: American Bison*

By Tyler Omoth

Introduces readers to the life, diet, habitat, behavior and physical description of American bison. Colourful spreads, fun facts, diagrams, a range map and a special reading feature make this an exciting read for animal lovers and report writers alike.

Omoth, T. (2017). *Animals of North America: American Bison*. Lake Elmo, MN: Focus Readers. (available on Amazon.ca)

<https://www.focusreaders.com/animals-of-north-america/american-bison/>

2. *American Bison – Bison bison*

By Nature Works

Discover the natural world and the connections that make nature work in this 16-part series for students in Grades 3 to 6. Student host Patrice Forrester and Senior Naturalist Dave Eler of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center explore the ways living things interact with the environment.

<https://nhpbs.org/natureworks/americanbison.htm>

IV. Post-Visit Activity Ideas

1. Differences between European uses of bison versus Indigenous uses (worldview discussions).

- a. Links to Treaty Education (Grade 4)
 - i. **HC4.3:** Explore the historical reasons why people entered into treaty.
Indicators: Examine how the disappearance of the buffalo and the loss of traditional hunting and trapping territories created a need for First Nations to enter into treaties.

2. Engaged Citizenship: A project for students to bring awareness about the bison and grassland restoration.

- a. **ELA OUTCOME CC4.1:** Compose and create a range of visual, multimedia, oral and written texts that explore identity, community and social responsibility.
 - i. Letter/postcard writing campaign.
 - ii. Make posters to share with others in their school/division.
 - iii. Create a Public Service Announcement video (PSA) about the importance of the project at Wanuskewin.
 - iv. Create a Heritage Minute.
 - v. Create a video of their visit using pictures taken during the trip.

3. What types of ecosystems could be created from the rewilding of the bison at Wanuskewin? Create a representation.

- a. **Science HC4.2:** Analyze the structures and behaviours of plants and animals that enable them to exist in various habitats.
 - i. Draw a diagram of an ecosystem the bison help nurture that didn't exist prior to the rewilding.
 - ii. Create a diorama of an ecosystem the bison help nurture that didn't exist prior to the rewilding.
 - iii. Create a tri-fold presentation to showcase some of the new animals, plants, and/or insects that have come back to this new grassland.

4. How has rewilding Wanuskewin affected the land around there? Has this happened anywhere else?

- a. **Science HC4.2:** Analyze the structures and behaviours of plants and animals that enable them to exist in various habitats.
 - i. See the changes caused by rewilding wolves in Yellowstone National Park. Watch one of the following:
TedTalk/TedEds at https://www.ted.com/talks/george_monbiot_for_more_wonder_rewild_the_world?language=en
<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/from-the-top-of-the-food-chain-down-rewilding-our-world-george-monbiot>
 - ii. As a class, brainstorm other changes you imagine will happen at Wanuskewin and the grasslands surrounding it once the bison numbers increase.
 - iii. Compare and contrast some of the changes that happened (will happen) at Yellowstone National Park and Wanuskewin.

5. Go out on your own nature walk in your community and see if you recognize any of the grassland plants you saw at Wanuskewin.

- a. **Science HC4.2:** Analyze the structures and behaviours of plants and animals that enable them to exist in various habitats.
- b. **Health USC4.2:** Illustrate how both traditional healing (including First Nations and Métis practices) and current Western medical advances have influenced the prevention and/or management of past and present health challenges (including mental health/illness, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, diabetes).
 - i. Write a report or presentation on one of the plants you found in both places.
 - ii. See if any of the plants you found match the plants in the resource *Medicines to Help Us* by Christi Belcourt and research some of the traditional medicinal uses for these plants.
Belcourt, C. (2007). *Medicines to Help Us: Traditional Métis Plant Use*. Saskatoon, SK: First People Publishing. ISBN: 9780920915790

<https://www.amazon.ca/Medicines-Help-Us-Traditional>

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/Web_SN_DisplayItem/30004000540738

6. Trappers and Traders – A Fur Trade Card Game

The purpose of the game is to demonstrate elements of the fur trade era and the people involved in the fur trade in a fun and easy-to-learn way. The game showcases the material culture of the different key groups (First Nations, Métis and Euro-Canadian trading companies) involved in the fur trade.

- a. **Social Studies IN4.1:** Analyze how First Nations and Métis people have shaped and continue to shape Saskatchewan.
 - i. Information site: <https://thesas.ca/fur-trade-game/>
 - ii. Purchase site: <https://thesas.ca/product/trappers-and-traders-card-game/>

7. Summarizing – ELA CR4.3: Listen, summarize, paraphrase and evaluate what was listened to and draw conclusions.

- a. Post-it Parade: On a Post-it, write one or two things you learned or remember as being important about the bison. Cluster the sticky note ideas into groups and name each group.
- b. One-Minute Paper Reflections: Provide students with one question for brief reflection. Emphasize that responses should be concise. Each student then records and submits their answers. As needed, follow up on comments. Be sure to summarize and respond to any important questions or issues that arise in the students' responses (e.g., concepts that did not seem clear to students).
- c. Paper Slide: On paper, small groups sketch and write what they learned. Then team representatives line up and, one at a time, slide their work under a video camera while quickly summarizing what was learned. The camera doesn't stop recording until each representative has completed his or her summary. Watch the video as a class.
- d. Gallery Walk: On chart paper, small groups of students write and draw what they learned. After the completed works are attached to the classroom walls, other students affix sticky notes to the posters to extend on the ideas, add questions or offer feedback.
- e. So What?: Have students answer this prompt – What takeaways from the lesson will be important to know three years from now? Why?
- f. Simile Me: Have students complete the following sentence – "The [concept, skill, word] is like _____ because _____." Can be extended to include drawing.

(c-f from Edutopia <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/22-powerful-closure-activities-todd-finley>)

- g. Test Your Classmates: Create a quiz (matching, multiple choice, short answer, etc.) to test one of your classmate's knowledge learned from the field trip. Trade questions with a classmate and answer as many as you can.

8. ART CP4.7: Create visual art works that express own ideas and draw on sources of inspiration from Saskatchewan.

- a. **CP4.8:** Create art works using a variety of visual art concepts (e.g., organic shapes), forms (e.g., kinetic sculpture, mural), and media (e.g., wood, wire, and found objects). Have students visually represent their visit to Wanuskewin. This could include any of the statues, landscape, animals, etc., or represent the legend visually.

9. Video clip – *Dances With Wolves* – showing the bison herds (older students).

- Why were the bison so important?
- What did it look like when millions of bison roamed wild?

10. Storybook writing on bison.

- Individual/partner.
- Student selected topic and format.

11. Concept of bison as teachers.

- What did we learn from our teachers?
- Gifts of stories – how are the stories told?
- What did we learn from the bison?

12. Buffalo and bison words in languages.

- Cree, Dakota/Lakota/Nakota, Heritage Michif, Dene, Sauteaux (see Glossary p.17)

V. Glossary

Buffalo versus Bison: Both terms are of colonial history. Bison refers to the species found in North America while buffalo refers to a species from Asia.

Bison: Bison are large, even-toed hoofed mammals of the family *Bovidae*. Two subspecies of bison exist in North America: the plains bison and wood bison.

The Indigenous terms for this animal are below:

Cree: paskwāw – mostos

Dakota/Lakota/Nakota: Tatanka – male buffalo, Pte – female buffalo

Dene: t'oghjjerε

Michif: Paskwaw moshtosh

Saulteaux: miškotē – pišihki

Bone Marrow: A soft substance that fills the bones of people and animals.

Bull: An uncastrated male.

Carbon: An element that is found in all living tissues.

Communal: When something is shared by all members of a community; for a common use.

Cow: A fully grown female bovine.

Depletion: A reduction in the number or quantity of something.

Driveline: A path created by stone piles that would be used to guide bison to the bison jumps.

Dung: Animal scat; used in pottery making.

Ecosystem: A large community of living organisms (plants, animals and microbes) in a particular area.

Genetics: A study of heredity and the variation of inherited characteristics.

Grasslands: A large open area of country covered with grass, especially one used for grazing.

Habitat: A natural home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism.

Heifer: A young female bovine animal that has not borne a calf.

Hide: The skin of a usually large animal.

Hooves: The hard covering on the foot of an animal.

Incisors: The teeth that have a sharp edge for biting.

Interdependence: How two or more people or things are dependent on each other.

Interaction: A way in which people or things act together and have an effect on each other.

Intestines: A long tube in the body that helps digest food after it leaves the stomach.

Keystone Species: A species of animal on which other species in an ecosystem largely depend, such that if it were removed, the ecosystem would change drastically.

Kinship: In First Nations societies, families are social networks of related people called kinship.

Plains: A region of Western Canada defined to include areas only covered by prairie. Characteristics include flat lands, grasslands, hot and dry summers and very cold winters.

Relationship: The way in which two or more people or animals are connected.

Resilience: The ability to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Restoration: The action of returning something to a former condition.

Scrotum: The sack of skin that contains the testicles of male animals.

Shaman: One who can interact and mediate with the spirit world on behalf of their community.

Sinew: A string-like material used for sewing and binding material; derived from muscle tendons of the bison.

Skull: A bone that houses a person's or animal's brain; bison skull is used in ceremony and carries spiritual significance.

Stomach: The organ in the body where food goes and begins to be digested after it is swallowed.

Sustainability: To avoid the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance; the ability to maintain at a certain rate or level.

Wallow: A natural topographical depression in the flat prairie land that holds rainwater and runoff usually created by the bison.

wahkóhtowin: A Cree word that translates to kinship but means more; it can mean relationships to others like family and friends.

wanuskewin: Cree word that translates to "being at peace with oneself."

Wanuskewin: Cultural historical centre of First Nations north of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Yearling: An animal that is a year old or that is in its second year.

VI. Resources

ONLINE RESOURCES

- 1. Bison**
<https://www.britannica.com/animal/bison>
- 2. Canadian Geographic – Bison**
<https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/animal-facts-bison>
 - Animal facts.
- 3. Canadian Wildlife Federation – North American Bison**
<https://cwf-fcf.org/en/resources/encyclopedias/fauna/mammals/north-american-bison.html>
 - Scientific name, description, similar species, habitat, diet and behavior.
- 4. Grade 6: Diversity of Life**
<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/from-the-top-of-the-food-chain-down-rewilding-our-world-george-monbiot>
- 5. Indigenous Peoples of Canada**
<https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/>
<https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/bison-hunting/>
- 6. Métis Art and Stories in the Classroom with Leah Marie Dorion – Multiple Grades**
 Series: LIVE Arts

 Why were bison essential to people living on the plains prior to the time of Treaty negotiations (1870s)? What does the bison represent today? This LIVE Arts broadcast features contemporary artwork and storytelling by Métis artist Leah Marie Dorion, based on her children's book, *Métis Camp Circle: A Bison Culture Way of Life*. Leah reads from the book, discusses the importance of bison (past and present), explains the use of Métis symbolism and discusses the composition and design of the illustrations. Leah guides students through a live drawing activity where they learn to draw and paint a bison as inspired by Leah's particular style of creating and imagery.

https://rover.edonline.sk.ca/en/rover/videos?utf8=%E2%9C%93&video%5Bm%5D=and&q%5Btitle_or_description_or_entry_or_series_name_or_series_description_cont%5D=metis+camp+circle
- 7. Office of the Treaty Commissioner**
<http://www.otc.ca/pages/education.html>
- 8. Seven Sacred Teachings by David Bouchard**
http://www.btgwinnipeg.ca/uploads/5/2/4/1/52412159/the_seven_sacred_teachings_.pdf
 - Story of the White Buffalo Calf Woman.
- 9. Scent of a Bison – Earth Rangers**
https://www.earthrangers.com/omg_animals/scent-of-a-bison/
 - Information on the bison's incredible sense of smell.
- 10. Smithsonian**
<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/news/its-bison-not-buffalo-and-other-american-bison-facts>
 - Explains the difference between bison and buffalo.

11. Social Studies – All Grades

<https://www.concentus.ca/>

- A committed group of teacher-leaders developed these grade-specific citizenship resources that directly align with Saskatchewan Social Sciences curricula.

12. The Buffalo – Grade 1 Unit

<https://www.spiritsd.ca/learningresources/FNM%20Resources/GR1,%20Buffalo%20Unit,%20Jn17.pdf>

- Language arts ideas with cross-curricular ideas.

13. The Learning Circle: Classroom Activities on First Nations in Canada

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1316530294102/1535458624988>

- Uses of bison, destruction of bison.

14. Trappers and Traders – A Fur Trade Card Game

Information site: <https://thesas.ca/fur-trade-game/>

Purchase site: <https://thesas.ca/product/trappers-and-traders-card-game/>

- The purpose of the game is to demonstrate elements of the fur trade era and the people involved in the fur trade in a fun and easy-to-learn way. The game showcases the material culture of the different key groups (First Nations, Métis and Euro-Canadian trading companies) involved in the fur trade.

15. Wanuskewin Heritage Park

<https://wanuskewin.com/>

- Shares story of Wanuskewin.
- Section on the bison.

16. World Wildlife Foundation

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/plains-bison>

- Bison facts.

BOOKS

1. *Bobbie Bison and the Seven Teachings*

By Achilles Gentle

This is part of the set of Seven Teaching Books published by Native Reflections. This is a great set to introduce young children to the Seven Teachings. Follow the adventures of Johnny, Sally, Tani, Bobbie, Bucky, Catcha and Folf as they all have fun in their own way. Each animal shows why they bring their own special teaching.

Gentle, A. (2013). *Bobbie Bison and the Seven Teachings*. Winnipeg, MB: Native Reflections. ISBN: 9781926896915.

<https://nativereflections.ca/products/bks-13>

2. *Buffalo Song*

By Joseph Bruchac

This is the story of the first efforts to save the vanishing bison (buffalo) herds from extinction in the United States in the 1870s and 1880s. Based on the true story of Samuel Walking Coyote, a Salish (Kalispel) Indian who rescued and raised orphaned buffalo calves.

Bruchac, J. (2008). *Buffalo Song*. New York: Lee & Low Books Inc. ISBN: 9781584302803.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000755963/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMMD10OX5BY161

3. **Honouring the Buffalo: A Plains Cree Legend**

By Judith Silverthorne and Ray Lavallee

This story, told in both English and Cree, describes how early First Nations people relied on the buffalo for food, clothing, shelter, hunting tools and other necessities of life. The narrator explains how the buffalo is honoured for its sacrifice. Pictures of items made from the buffalo, facts about the buffalo and questions to enrich the use of the text are included at the end of the book.

Silverthorne, J. & Lavallee, R. (2014). *Honouring the buffalo: A Plains Cree Legend = Ewako oṃa ohci paskwaṃi-mostos ka-kisteṃimiht : neḥiyaw-aḥimowin*. Regina: Your Nickel's Worth Publishing. ISBN: 9781927756331.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000735338/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMD810DD14G084

4. **Métis Camp Circle: A Bison Culture Way of Life**

By Leah Dorion

During much of the nineteenth century, bison hunting was integral to the Métis social, economic and political life. As "people of the buffalo," the Métis were bison hunters par excellence. The author transports young readers back in time when bison were the basis of Métis lifeways on the Plains.

Dorion, L. (2019). *Metis Camp Circle: A Bison Culture Way of Live = Li kaan roon di Michif : kaa kii paypimaatishiyahk avik lii bufloo*. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute. ISBN: 9781926795959

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000851465/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKM1T10RZA7V079

<https://rover.edonline.sk.ca/en/rover/videos/3310>

5. **People of the Buffalo: How the Plains Indians Lived**

By Maria Campbell

No other group in North America has been more romanticized and stereotyped than the Plains Indians, the Blackfoot, Plains Cree, Dakota, Kiowa and other grassland tribes. This book, with its authenticated drawings, tells how the Plains Indians lived: how they hunted buffalo, made their teepees, clothing and tools. It also explores their beliefs, ceremonies and feeling for family.

Campbell, M. (1976). *People of the Buffalo: How the Plains Indians Lived*. Buffalo NY: Firefly Books. ISBN: 0888940890.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000454765/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMJYJ0QE9E1174

6. **Spirit of the White Bison**

By Beatrice Culleton Mosioner

The great plains of North America were once home to great herds of bison. The Aboriginal people who lived there revered the bison and relied on them for food, clothing and shelter. Into one of these great herds, Little White Buffalo was born in the 19th century. In this heartfelt story she retells her life – a life that coincides with the devastation of the bison, destroyed by hunters and the coming of the railway.

Mosioner, B. (2013). *Spirit of the White Bison*. Winnipeg, MB: Highwater Press. ISBN: 9781553793830.

<https://www.portageandmainpress.com/product/spirit-of-the-white-bison-2/>

1. Saskatchewan Critters (DVD)

When Eldon sends Sid and Idee to look for wild Prairie Bison in Saskatchewan, our adventurers soon discover more than they bargained for. First, they visit Old Man on His Back, Saskatchewan, where a young herd of wild bison has been released to roam in their native grassland habitat for the first time in over 100 years!

2. Canadian Geographic Kids (2008). Saskatchewan Critters: Endangered and Extinct Creatures of Saskatchewan (DVD). New Westminster BC: Distribution Access.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000612842/Lang=En/BookBag=T8SKMMD10OX5BY773

3. Bison Supermarket (Educational Kit)

Available at each school division office in Saskatchewan, Pakkisiimon Nuyeqáh Library System and at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre.

Available at the Emma Stewart Resources Centre:

http://libnet.stf.sk.ca/4DACTION/web_Gen_2002_ShowWebDetails/30004000880944/Lang=En/BookBag=T8T7JEN10DW1W1071

<p>Bison Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food for the people • Meat • Fat • Marrow • Organs and other parts of the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tongue • Kidneys • Brains • Liver • Heart 	<p>Other Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toys • Games • Soap • Covering for horses during winter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brains for tanning hides • Stomach for water pails • Drums 	<p>Clothing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitts • Coats • Footwear • Jewelry • Clothing
<p>Shelter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teepee walls • Floors • Hide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blankets • Rugs 	<p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrapers • Handles • Cups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knives • Spoons 	<p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sled and travois
<p>Babies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cradleboards 		<p>Hooves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glue 		<p>Skull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual

VIDEO

1. White Buffalo Calf Song (Return of the Bison to Wanuskewin)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6Yu8CmSmGw>

Kayas kehtayak

Ih peh twecik

Peh matisowin

Eh peh mehkowiya

Ah makehkwa kehciymatan

Paskwaw mostos

Rough translation:

A long time ago, Elders told us of a great gift that will return to us.

This gift is one that we must take care of, and treat it with great respect.

So let's work together and take care of this great gift.

The White Buffalo that was gifted to us.

