

PREPARATION:

1. Find a big map of North America that will cover a large portion of a bulletin board. Trace the map onto a large piece of paper, marking only the outlines of the countries, provinces, and states. Do not label the political divisions. Attach the map to the bulletin board.
2. Collect atlases, road maps, and other sources of geographic names.
3. Make copies of the buffalo template on page 42 or trace the buffalo template from the buffalo binder onto index cards, one per student. Cut out the buffalo shapes (or have students do this step).

PROCEDURE:

1. Ask each student to cut out six buffalo shapes from construction paper. The shapes should be big enough for them to cut easily but small enough so that a lot of them can fit on the map.
2. Instruct each student to find six places in the United States or Canada that have the word "buffalo" or "bison" in their names. (They should look for towns and other political names, plus rivers and other landscape features.) They should write the information on the buffalo shapes, one place per shape, and include the name of the state or province where the place or natural feature is located.
3. Gather the students in a half circle in front of the bulletin board. One by one, ask each student to pin one of the buffalo shapes in the appropriate place on the bulletin board. Continue around the group until all the buffalo shapes are pinned in place.
4. As a group, discuss the results. Did they expect to find a town called Buffalo in Wyoming? What about Ohio? What do the locations of the shapes tell us about where buffalo used to roam? (For example, do they think buffalo used to graze along the Buffalo River in Arkansas?) How does that compare to where buffalo roam today? Why the difference?
5. Have the students draw an outline of the buffalo's historic range, based on the geographic names they discovered.
6. Show them the range map from the trunk; it shows the range in the early 1700s, mid 1800s, and today. Discuss the reasons why buffalo no longer live wild in many of these places.

Caution: Many popular books and articles about buffalo present simplistic explanations for the decline of buffalo populations. Use the resource list at the back of this guide and encourage students to consult a wide variety of sources, including the Internet.

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS:

- ❖ You may wish to focus the search by instructing each student or group of students to look in a particular region.
- ❖ If necessary, arrange a time for your students to use the computer lab to conduct Internet searches.

EXTENSIONS AND ASSESSMENTS: (** extensions can also be used to assess the students' mastery of the learning objectives)

- * Have students research the history of one of the locations they found.

- * For the more advanced students, have each person choose one of the topics below and research how that topic affected free-ranging buffalo:
 - climate change
 - impacts of human disease on native tribal populations
 - military and political strategy
 - corporate growth
 - population expansion of European-American settlers
 - the Civil War

- * The near-extinction of buffalo was one of the catalysts for the wildlife conservation movement in the United States and Canada. Assign students the task of preparing reports about how buffalo were saved from extinction and what this effort meant for wildlife conservation in general.

- * Ask the students to write short stories set in the future, pretending that buffalo have returned to their former range. How could this occur? What would it mean for Native Americans and other people? For other animals?

- ** Have students write a travel guide to various locations that have buffalo in the name. Include historical references and details on any landmarks related to buffalo.

Buffalo Template

