

Buffalo in Our Lives

Adapted from "A Scrapbook for the Birds," *Ranger Rick's NatureScope: Birds, Birds, Birds* published by the National Wildlife Federation 1998.

SUMMARY: Make a scrapbook about buffalo and people.

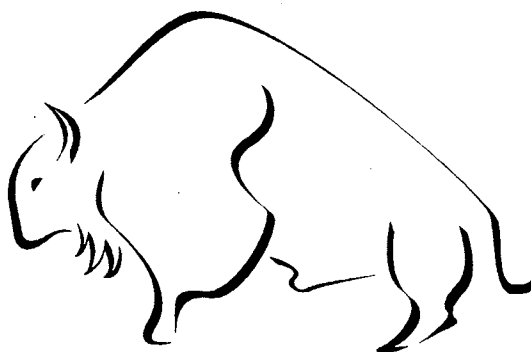
GRADE LEVEL: 4-8

TIME ☀: 1-2 periods

SUBJECTS: Science, History, Social Studies,
Language Arts, Art

MATERIALS:

- ◆ construction paper, preferably 11x14 inches
- ◆ crayons and markers
- ◆ magazines, catalogs, and newspapers (for cutting out pictures and articles)
- ◆ scissors
- ◆ hole punch
- ◆ glue
- ◆ yarn or string
- ◆ reference books
- ◆ two pieces of cardboard, same size or slightly larger than the construction paper
- ◆ chalkboard or easel paper



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Describe three ways that buffalo have affected people's lives.
- ✓ Sing a song or tell a story about buffalo.
- ✓ Describe several examples of buffalo in art and as symbols.

BACKGROUND:

Once you begin looking, you can find buffalo in an amazing array of places. They show up on the canyon walls of the western United States as petroglyphs (drawings scratched on the surface) and pictographs (paintings on the rocks). They are used by Native Americans in their paintings, ceremonies, songs, and stories. They are also a part of modern mass culture, showing up as mascots, on stamps, in jewelry and clothes, and more. Buffalo appear as symbols, art, and inspiration in almost every aspect of North American culture.

Many Native American tribes honor the buffalo for its strength, endurance, and because it provided them with so many supplies. But why are buffalo so prevalent in the European-American culture? Speculation about this drives the careers of many anthropologists, sociologists, and historians. Perhaps the answer is simple and can be found in the examples your students discover.

PREPARATION:

1. Collect reference books on art, modern mass culture, Native American culture (historic and modern), writing, and music.
2. If necessary, arrange a time for your students to use the computer lab to conduct Internet searches.

PROCEDURE:

1. Copy the list, "Buffalo In Our Lives," onto a transparency and project it.
2. Split your class into four teams and assign one of the categories to each team. (You may need to add or take away a team member here and there, since some categories have more topics than others.)
3. Explain that each team will be responsible for producing one scrapbook page per topic. It's up to the teams to decide if each person wants to do a topic or if they want to work on the entire category together. They can cut photographs and articles from the magazines and newspapers from the group collection, search for more information in the library, and download images and information from the Internet. (Be careful about copyrighted materials.) Then they attach and arrange their illustrations, articles, and photographs on the scrapbook pages.
4. When the pages are completed, punch three holes down the left-hand side of each page. Put all the pages together, add the cardboard covers, and tie the "Buffalo Book" together with yarn or string.
5. Display the scrapbook where everyone can look through it and other students can see how buffalo affect our lives.
6. Over time, encourage students to make new scrapbook pages as they find new images and examples.
7. Discuss why buffalo are so much a part of our lives (or not, depending on where you live).

BUFFALO IN OUR LIVES

Category 1— Buffalo in Art

Topics:

rock art (petroglyphs and pictographs)
wildlife art
sculpture
photography
jewelry and other designs

Category 2 — Symbols

Topics:

sports teams
state and provincial symbols
tribal symbols
common sayings
advertising

Category 3 — Literature & Drama

Topics:

poetry
movies
myths
songs
cartoons
dance

Category 4 — Buyable Buffalo

Topics:

jewelry
T-shirt designs
fabric patterns
buffalo on clothing
stamps and coins
furniture

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS:

- ❖ Ask students to design a bulletin board that includes items from each category.
- ❖ Younger students can convey their understanding of buffalo by making a pretend pictograph or cave painting. Give them a piece of brown paper bag, let them wad it up and then smooth it out to get a textured surface. Now ask them to paint a story about buffalo. Discuss simple ways to draw items such as: adult buffalo, calves, adult and young humans, cooking and hunting tools, food, fire, sun, clouds, etc. Have them use squares, circles, and triangles to decorate the border of the paper. Then let them figure out each other's stories.
- ❖ Include your scrapbook with the *Buffalo Box* to share with other students and schools.

EXTENSIONS AND ASSESSMENTS:

- * Allow the students time to look for buffalo images and information outside of school. Good places to explore include local museums, historical societies, department stores, and toy stores. If possible, provide them with a camera to record the images they find.
- * The book has four covers: front, back, inside front, and inside back. Ask each team to design one of the covers, placing the title on each cover. Periodically change the covers so that over time each design is the "front" cover.
- * Ask students to write a skit, song, story, or poem using two or more images from each category.
- * Organize a buffalo night where students can share the information they've researched about buffalo in our lives within the community. Include music, an art gallery, a movie presentation, and a literature review.