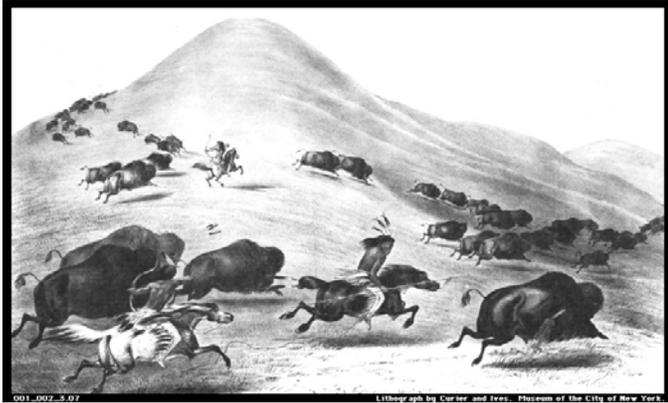


# Linked Destiny: The Buffalo and the Plains Indians



Susan L. Dreyer

*Media Rich Lesson Plan*

**Grade Levels:** 7-8

**Time Allotment:** Four 45-minute sessions

**Overview:** Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the northern Plains Indian tribes, still somewhat isolated from increasing streams of trappers, miners, and homesteaders arriving from the east, lived in harmony with nature's bounty. Constantly moving in nomadic clan groups, the Plains tribes pursued their sacred source of life: the buffalo. As European immigrants began to move westward through the northern plains, Indian leaders experienced vision after vision that prophesized the end of their culture. Meanwhile, in less than fifty years, they witnessed the deliberate annihilation of the buffalo by the American government in an effort to force them to move off their traditional hunting grounds to reservations. This lesson will link the disappearance of the buffalo to the demise of the traditional way of life for Plains Indians.

**Subject:** US History

## Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Describe the importance of the buffalo in the Plains Indian culture;
- Summarize the impact of 19<sup>th</sup> century westward expansion on traditional Indian lands;
- Explain how the decline of the buffalo affected Plains Indian tribes;
- Visually illustrate the effects that 19<sup>th</sup> century westward expansion had on the Plains Indian tribes.

From the United States History Standards for grades 7-12, available online at <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards/era6-5-12.html>:

### Standard 4A:

The student understands various perspectives on federal Indian policy, westward expansion, and the resulting struggles.

## Montana Social Studies Standards:

### Content Standard 1:

Students access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations.

### Content Standard 3:

Students apply geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., location, place, human/environment interactions, movement, and regions).

### Content Standard 4:

Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

### Content Standard 6:

Students demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies.

## Media Components:

### Video

*The American Experience: Last Stand at Little Big Horn*, WGBH TV Educational Foundation and Thirteen WNET, © 1992.

### Music MP3

*Buffalo Song* by Rise, available for free download at <http://www.efolkmusic.com/ViewArtist.asp?Artist=Rise>.

### Web Sites

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The following websites are bookmarked for easy classroom access on <http://www.trackstar.hypotec.org> in track ID 104534.

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1. *Apple Quicktime download page*

<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

A free Quicktime Player is available on this website for use with interactive websites.

2. *Efolkmusic.com*

<http://www.efolkmusic.com/ViewArtist.asp?Artist=Rise>

This web page contains samples of music from the music group, Rise. A free MP3 version of *Buffalo* is available for download. After clicking on the free MP3 link, you will have to register to initiate the download of this song to your computer. The song will open in either Windows Media Player or Quicktime player.

3. *Plains Indian Culture* by Susan Liening and Judy Schurman of Germantown Elementary

<http://www.germantown.k12.il.us/html/plains.html>

This web site examines the cultures of the “first Americans.” It contains a large, colorful map of tribal groups throughout America and a page about the Plains Indian culture showing its heavy reliance on the buffalo.

4. *Native American Women* by the Denver Public Library

<http://gowest.coalliance.org/exhib/gallery4/leadin.htm>

This website details the traditions common to most native American women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many pictures show the importance of their dwellings, buffalo, and family life.



5. *Human History in the Black Hills* by American Park Network

<http://www.americanparknetwork.com/parkinfo/ru/history/>

This website follows the migration of the Lakota Sioux into the Black Hills from the east. It also describes the arrival of Custer's expedition in 1874.

6. *Indian Cultures* by Susan Liening and Judy Schurman of Germantown Elementary

<http://www.germantown.k12.il.us/html/culture.html>

This web page contains a map of the five American Indian culture groups of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

7. *The Disappearing Buffalo* by the Carnegie Museum

<http://www.carnegiemuseums.org/cmnh/exhibits/north-south-east-west/lakota/loss.html>

This interactive website by the Carnegie Museum shows the dramatic decline of the buffalo in North America from 1700 to 1884. Especially interesting is the effect shown by the advancing railroad as it crossed the west.

8. *The Descent of Civilization: The Extermination of the American Buffalo* by Christopher W. Czajka

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/frontierlife/essay8.html>

This essay discusses causes of the destruction of the American buffalo in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Materials

For each student:

- “Buffalo” concept map
- Words to *Buffalo Song* by Rise
- Plains Indian Culture Graphic Organizer
- Black Hills Migration timeline
- 1870 Map of Westward Expansion
- 1 piece 12” X 18” white poster board
- Colored markers, crayons

For the teacher:

- Plains Indian Culture Graphic Organizer answer key
- Black Hills Migration timeline answer key

For class discussion:

- A black board or chart paper
- Chalk or markers

*(Alternately, teachers might wish to make transparencies of the five student handouts and use them with an overhead projector.)*

## Vocabulary

Culture – The civilization of a people, including customs, arts, and conveniences

Immigrant – A person who comes into a foreign country or region to live

Lakota – Sioux tribe in the Dakota Territory

Indigenous – Native to a region or country where found



Sinew – A tough, strong band or cord that joins muscle to bone; tendon  
Sodbuster – US slang for farmer

## Prep for Teachers

Prior to teaching this lesson,

1. Bookmark the Trackstar website used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom. Load the Quicktime player plug-in (available free at <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>) on each computer as well.
2. Using a computer on which students can focus for the introductory activity, log into <http://www.efolkmusic.com/ViewArtist.asp?Artist=Rise> to download *Buffalo Song* before the lesson so that it will be ready to play (by pushing the play button again without restarting the download) during the step 2 of the introductory activity. **NOTE: If your computer is networked, make sure that you are logged in with administrative privileges, or you may not be able to download this file!**
3. Familiarize yourself with the student handouts:
  - a. “Buffalo” concept map
  - b. Words to *Buffalo Song* by Rise
  - c. Plains Indian Culture Graphic Organizer
  - d. 1870 US map
  - e. Black Hills Migration timeline

These handouts are organization aides for focusing class discussion and independent reading of web pages. The culminating activity of this lesson includes a hands-on project that will be constructed using the information gathered on these handouts.

4. Prepare the video, *Last Stand: Battle at Little Bighorn*, by advancing the tape just beyond the part where Johnson Holy Rock, a Lakota, says, “Because we were an obstacle, we had to be removed.” At this point there is a still drawing of the battle and the title, *Last Stand at Little Bighorn*.

## Prepare the hands-on element of the lesson:

Make copies of the following for each student:

- “Buffalo” concept map
- Words to *Buffalo Song* by Rise
- Plains Indian Culture Graphic Organizer
- 1870 US map
- Black Hills Migration timeline

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**When using media, provide students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, a specific task to complete and/or information to identify during or after viewing of video segments, Web sites, or other multimedia elements.**

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## Day 1: Introductory Activity

### Step 1. Brainstorming “Buffalo”

Pass out copies of the “Buffalo” concept map to each student.

Draw a large copy of the “Buffalo” concept map on a blackboard or chart paper. Ask your students what they already know about the term, “Buffalo,” soliciting as many ideas as possible. As students respond, fill out the



concept web surrounding the word on the board, using the guide words, “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “how,” and “why” to categorize student contributions. Ask the students to make similar notes on their copies. When this activity is completed, ask the students to keep their papers for the next activity.

*(The categories should invite discussion about the following:*

1. *Who were/are connected to the buffalo? Answers may include the Plains Indians.*
2. *What do they remember about the buffalo? Students might answer that they were hunted by Plains tribes.*
3. *Where did the buffalo live? The buffalo lived across the Great Plains of North America*
4. *When did the buffalo die out? Wild herds died out about 1900.*
5. *How was the buffalo useful? How did it die out? Nearly every part of the buffalo was useful for the Plains Indians. Students will explore this subject in Learning Activity Steps 1 and 2. The buffalo died out when the US government deliberately endorsed its extermination in order to clear the land for the railroad construction and settlers who wanted to move west.*
6. *Why was the buffalo important? The buffalo was the life blood of the Plains Indians. They prayed to the Great Spirit that there would always be buffalo to ensure the tribe’s well-being.*

*Students may speculate about these questions if they aren’t sure of the answers. All responses should be added to the chart for later discussion.)*

## **Step 2. Multimedia Immersion: Extending knowledge about “Buffalo”**

Pass out copies of the words to *Buffalo Song* by Rise to the class.

**Website 1:** “Efolkmusic.com” <http://www.efolkmusic.com/ViewArtist.asp?Artist=Rise>

**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to try to gather more information about categories on the concept map from Step 1 to the song as they listen to the song at <http://www.efolkmusic.com/ViewArtist.asp?Artist=Rise> .** (To play this free MP3, scroll down the page to where you see the link to the streaming MP3 version of *Buffalo Song*. Click on that link to start the automatic download. Immediately after it completes the download, push the *play* button in Windows Media Player or Apple Quicktime.) After the song has played, ask the students if they can add or change any information on their concept maps. Then, ask them if they can answer these questions:

1. *Where did the bison roam? (The green plains.)*
2. *Who followed the ancient trails after the buffalo? (The Plains Indian tribes)*
3. *Who slayed the hunters? (Strange men with guns from a stranger land- these were white men.)*
4. *From whose point of view is the song written? (The Plains Indian)*

## **Step 3. Synthesizing Information: “Buffalo”**

Invite your students to revise their concept maps to reflect new discoveries made during the above class discussion. Ask the class to suggest changes to the large buffalo concept map (*or transparency*) in front of the classroom.



## Day 2 and 3: Learning Activities

### Step 1. Student online investigation: The Plains Indian dependence on the Buffalo

Pass out copies of the Plains Indian Culture Graphic Organizer to each student.

Your students will now research three websites for information about the Plains Indian dependence on the buffalo. As they read, ask them to fill out the Graphic Organizer with pertinent information. Use the teacher answer key as a guide to check for understanding.

**Website 2:** “Plains Indian Culture” <http://www.germantown.k12.il.us/html/plains.html>.

**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to complete the Plains Indian Culture Graphic Organizer by reading the information on this page and in the buffalo and basic needs (food, clothing and shelter) links.**

**Website 3:** “Native American Women” <http://gowest.coalliance.org/exhib/gallery4/leadin.htm>.

**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking your students to search pictures and captions in the *Dwellings* and *Daily Life II* pages to add information to their concept maps.** *(The Native American Women website contains period photographs of women carrying out daily tasks involving processing freshly killed buffalo. Students should add details to their concept maps about butchering the buffalo:*

1. *how- with hand tools*
2. *by whom- the women*
3. *what parts of the animal were used (in these photos)- the hide and meat*
4. *when the animal was processed- while still warm*

### Step 2. Student investigation: The Clash of the Plains Indian and White Cultures

Pass out copies of the Black Hills Migrations timeline to your students. In this step, your students will analyze:

- The history of migrations through the Black Hills area to discover how tribal movements beginning 9,000 years ago paralleled buffalo migrations.
- The westward movement of white settlers into the Black Hills area who were involved in exploring, fur trading, “sod busting”, gold prospecting, and carrying out military operations for the US Government.

**Website 4:** “Human History in the Black Hills” <http://www.americanparknetwork.com/parkinfo/ru/history/>

**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to complete the “Black Hills Migrations” timeline and the concluding questions at the bottom of the page.** *(Students should add names of groups who inhabited the area from 9,000 years ago through 1874. Concluding questions focus on the effect that the “Newcomers” (white settlers) had on traditional migrations of buffalo and local tribes. The overall effect on tribes was that they lost their primary source of sustenance and their land. Use the teacher answer key to check student work.)*

### Step 3. Student investigation: The Effect of Westward Expansion on Plains Tribes

Pass out copies of the 1870 Map of Westward Expansion to your students.



**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to summarize the trends in the settlement of the country as shown in 1870.** *(Students should summarize that the Plains Indians' nomadic way of life was on the brink of extinction. By this time, most of the country, with the exception of the northern plains region, had achieved statehood. The railroad system, extensively developed in the northeastern industrial regions, had just forged its first link across the west. The railroad expedited travel on the Oregon Trail, bringing thousands of homesteaders west and cutting directly through the plains buffalo range. The Bozeman Trail continued to bring settlers into the Great Sioux Reservation created by the Laramie Treaty of 1868.*

**Website 5:** "The First Americans" <http://www.germantown.k12.il.us/html/culture.html>

**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to use the information from the map to transfer the names of tribes located in the orange (Plains culture) region to their 1870 maps.** *(Students should add the names of the Blackfoot, Crow, Nez Perce, and Dakota tribes in the Montana and Dakota Territories on the 1870 map.)*

#### **Step 4. Student Investigation: The Plains Indians Envision Their Future**

Insert the video, *Last Stand at Little Big Horn* into your VCR.

**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to find out what Chief Spotted Horse's and Black Elk's visions predicted about the future.** START the tape after Johnson Holy Rock, a Lakota, says, "Because we were an obstacle, we had to be removed," where there is a still picture of the battle with the words, *Last Stand at Little Bighorn*. This segment runs about three minutes. Play through the speech about ants. STOP the tape at the *second* picture of Chief Black Elk, after the second quote, "*Black Elk, Lakota.*"

Check for understanding. *(Both men predicted that the white man, or Wachitu, would come in increasing numbers from across a great body of water and would take their country.)*

#### **Step 5. Student Investigation: The Disappearing Buffalo**

Ask your students to log into the Disappearing Buffalo website to study the interactive timeline showing the dramatic reduction in the North American buffalo range from 1700 to 1884.

**Website 6:** "The Disappearing Buffalo" <http://www.carnegiemuseums.org/cmnh/exhibits/north-south-east-west/lakota/loss.html>.

**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to click on each date and read the information that accompanies it. Then, ask them to take their 1870 Map of Westward Expansion and shade in the buffalo range shown on the 1870 page of the timeline.** *(Students should see by shading in their maps that the 1870 buffalo range was reduced to the central part of Colorado Territory south of the railroad and, north of the railroad, to an area in the middle of the Montana, Wyoming, and Dakota Territories. By 1884, this territory would be reduced to small spots of land, including Yellowstone National Park and private ranches.)*

### **Day 4: Culminating Activity**

#### **Step 1: Student Reading: PBS Essay by Christopher W. Czajka**

**Website 7:** "The Descent of Civilization: The Extermination of the American Buffalo" <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/frontierlife/essay8.html>



**Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to determine from the essay who or what was responsible for the destruction of the American buffalo.**

When the students have finished reading the essay, discuss with them what information can be added to the “How” and “Why” categories of their “Buffalo” concept maps. *[Students could summarize the following from the essay:*

1. *How did the buffalo die out?- settling and civilizing the plains*
2. *Why did it die out?- greed, lack of government policies to protect the west during expansion (ignorance), hunting the cows more than the bulls, stupidity of the animals themselves, proficiency of firearms (technology)]*

## **Step 2: Student Project: Poster Reflections**

Ask your students to create a poster depicting the effects of westward expansion on the buffalo and the Plains Indian culture. The poster theme might address the following questions:

- What was the relationship between the Plains Indian and the buffalo? *(The Plains Indians and the buffalo were inextricably linked by the Indian’s dependence on the buffalo for their quality of life.)*
- How many buffalo lived on the northern plains in 1800? In 1900? *(Posters might illustrate the sharp drop in buffalo population from 1800, when there were about 16 million buffalo on the northern plains, to 1900, when there were no more wild buffalo left.)*
- How did government policies affect the 19<sup>th</sup> century Plains Indian? *(The Indian population of the northern plains was forced to leave their lands and relocate in government agencies after their traditional way of life was destroyed by westward expansion.)*

**Assessment of the posters:** Ask students to help determine evaluation points for a rubric in which the posters can be graded. The rubric might cover historical accuracy, use of lesson handouts, and design elements.

## **Cross-Curricular Extensions**

### **LANGUAGE ARTS**

Create a mock interview of an historical Plains Indian chief that asks questions about the importance of the buffalo in tribal traditions.

### **INDIAN STUDIES**

Research the use of buffalo symbolism in American Indian religion, art, and dance.

### **VISUAL ART**

Search the Internet for examples of American Indian art related to the buffalo: depictions of the hunt, decorated tepees, robes, and other items of clothing, tools and other useful objects.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Create a multimedia presentation using HyperStudio or PowerPoint that shows the link between the buffalo and the Plains Indians.



## Community Connections

- Investigate local American Indian tribes to research tribal traditions relating to the buffalo.
- Visit a local zoo, museum, or historical center to study the buffalo.

## Student Handouts

- “Buffalo” concept map
- Words to *Buffalo Song* by Rise
- Plains Indian Culture Graphic Organizer
- 1870 US map
- Black Hills Migration timeline