



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Bison Unit: Lesson 1 - Connection and Interdependence Between Humans, Animals, and the Natural World

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Please read this Acknowledgement before the start of this lesson to respect the knowledge that is being shared and the Land of the People where the knowledge originates.:*

We respectfully acknowledge the original lands of the Indigenous Peoples of Treaty 4: Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dakota, Lakota and Treaty 6: Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, and Dakota whose knowledge inform this lesson. As well, we acknowledge the homeland to many winged, four-legged, crawling, and water creatures.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Upon successful completion of this lesson plan, students will be able to:*

1. Understand the interdependence of humans and the natural world through Indigenous legends and storytelling.
2. Examine humans place and connection within the natural world. (Broad Areas of Learning)

**Cross-Curricular Competencies:** *This lesson fits within the Science 10 Ecology unit, as it displays the importance and connection humans have with nature.* 3. Reflect on pre-contact Indigenous worldview and identity through key people, narratives, and events. [DR 10.1] 4. Conduct and inquiry to explore the process of reconciliation and its impact on Indigenous worldview and identity for future generations. [DR 10.3; (TRC Focus)] 5. Reflect on the pre-contact functions and significance of family, community, and kinship through key people, narratives, and events. [IN 10.1]

- *Analyze the function of families and the importance of traditional Indigenous family life;*
- *Appreciate the use of story in the discipline and guidance techniques of Indigenous peoples;*
- *Value Indigenous worldviews as valid ways of thinking and knowing and understand that worldviews underlie self-concept;*
- *Personal conflict resolution;*
- *Explore the unique ways Indigenous peoples experience spirituality.*

[Science DR 10.1, 10.3, IN 10.1]

6. Understand the history, nature and effects of social injustice on Indigenous peoples in Canada and internationally.

- *Increase understanding of Indigenous philosophy and how it relates and is applied to issues of social justice.*

[Science IN 20.1]



### Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being

#### Origin

Treaty 4 & Treaty 6 Territories  
Saskatoon  
Saskatchewan

#### Learning Level / Grade

**10**

Also: 11, 12, Post-Secondary,  
Youth (up to age 30), Families  
/ Parents



**135 mins**

#### Related Subjects

Archaeology, Art, History,  
Social Studies, Literacy and  
Literature, On-the-Land

7. Analyze the diverse and dynamic relationship between Aboriginal people and the land.

- *Discover how cultural factors and worldviews influence a peoples' relationship to the environment. A special relationship exists between Aboriginal peoples and the land.*

[Science DR 30.1]

PGP Goals:

- 2.2 Knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Culture and History (e.g., Treaties, Residential School, Scrip, and Worldview).
- 4.2 Demonstrates the ability to incorporate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledge, content and perspectives.

**LIST OF ACTIVITIES**

1. Significance of Bison Teachings and Facts
2. Ahtahkakoop Learns the Story of Buffalo Child

**MATERIALS**

## DESCRIPTION

This lesson is about Bison Teachings and the origin of the Bison Rock that once sat in Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley. It is about how the rock came to be through the story of Buffalo Child. Buffalo Child was a lost baby who was adopted by the buffalo. Once Buffalo Child was old enough he went to live with the Cree people, and when he did, he realized he was in conflict between the human beings and the bison.

## HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

*This lesson plan has been developed with an Indigenous lens that is holistic in nature, a way of being and knowing that acknowledges our relationships with 'all our relations', including plants and animals, other human beings, the water, land, wind, sun, moon, stars, and more - everything seen and unseen. With 'all our relations' in mind, this lesson plan has been developed with a focus on:*

- Language and Culture
- Participatory and experiential learning activities
- Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders
- Relationship with family, ancestors
- Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit
- Connections are made with everyday life
- Nurturing healthy relationships in school and community
- Relationship with the land
- Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)

## TEACHERS' GUIDE

### Background/Foundational Information

- **Subject:** Indigenous Studies 10, 20, 30

**Grade(s):** 10-12

**Topic:** Indigenous Worldview

**Essential Question:** How is the connection between the bison and Indigenous Peoples important in the learning about ourselves, our philosophy, and our world or worldview?

**Terminology:** Bison is a scientific term for the species, whereas buffalo is a common everyday term. Cree word: paskwawimostos = a prairie cow.

This unit is an enhancement for the videos created by [Buffalo People Arts Institute](#).

wahkotowin-relationship: interconnectedness between humans and natural systems. This basically means that everything is related, for example, 'what we do to the earth we do to ourselves', or 'we are what we eat'. Relationships extend far beyond just people. We have relationships with the bison, with the trees, with the lakes and river systems, with the fish, and the birds. The relationship First Nations and Métis have with the bison is an essential one; it is because the buffalo is one of the grand spirits and requires the upmost respect, care, and responsibility.

## ACTIVITIES

## 1 - Significance of Bison Teachings and Facts

**Purpose**

To learn about the significance and spiritual connection to the Bison from an Indigenous perspective.

**Time:** 30 mins

**Activity Instructions**

Watch Buffalo People Arts Institute Part 1 - Introducing Buffalo People Arts Institute

1. Introduce Indigenous ways of knowing being and doing and compare this to the video, think about the examples given. Indigenous worldview is circular and connected/interdependent whereas, Western worldview focuses on hierarchical connection, with humans at the top. In Indigenous worldview, nature is respected and the focus is on abundance and community.
2. In Part 1, what does the knowledge keeper Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway share about the bison teachings? What does she say?
3. Discuss the importance of the bison in Indigenous societies.
4. Share the story, *Ahtahkakoop Learns the Story of Buffalo Child*, with the class. Any age group benefits from being read to out loud. Discuss the story presented, as well as the lessons being taught from Part 1.
5. Have student think about what lessons are being taught throughout the video and story? How do these activities display a human connection to the land, animals, and nature?
6. For added learning, have students represent part of the story in a visual format through a piece of art, song, or poem, or retell the story in one's own voice. You can create a rubric to evaluate the student's work.

**This activity is designed to connect with learners with these learning styles...**

- Spiritual (e.g., Relational) Learners
- Physical (e.g., Tactile, Experiential, Visual) Learners

**... in the following ways:**

This activity connects with *spiritual learners* demonstrating we are all related, and that land has a special significance to Indigenous peoples.

This activity also connects with *physical learners* because students will listen to the video and then read a story. Students can recreate the story in whatever medium they are most comfortable with, art, music, poetry, etc.

**Suggested Adaptations for Different Kinds of Learners**

**Adaptations/Differentiation:** \*You can have students do a mind-map instead of a journal response if they have trouble using the journaling technique.

## TEACHING NOTES

## 2 - Ahtahkakoop Learns the Story of Buffalo Child

### Purpose

To learn about the origin of the Bison Rock that once sat in the Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan.

**Time:** 20 mins

### Activity Instructions

Read the story, *Ahtahkakoop Learns the Story of Buffalo Child*, to the students. After students have listened to the story of Buffalo Child, have students answer the following questions.

1. How had the child in the story been lost?
2. Why was the life of this newborn child saved?
3. Being raised by the Buffalo, what had the child learned?
4. When did the Buffalo Child realize he was different from the other buffalo?
5. What did Buffalo Child do after his realization?
6. Discuss the inner conflict Buffalo Child is experiencing.
7. When was the moment the Buffalo child turns to stone?
8. What do you learn about this stone?
9. What did you learn about the land where the stone image sat?

**This activity is designed to connect with learners with these learning styles...**

- Intellectual (e.g., Rational, Logical) Learners

**... in the following ways:**

This activity connects with *intellectual learners* because students are processing the story of Buffalo Child and finding answers in what the story means.

**Suggested Adaptations for Different Kinds of Learners**

N/A

## TEACHING NOTES

## ASSESSMENT

*This section contains information for assessing progress in students' learning. While Indigenous approaches to assessment may be highlighted, conventional assessment methods may also be discussed.*

Retell the story of Buffalo Child in one's own voice or recreate in the form of art, music, or poetry.

Using an *assessment for learning strategy*, it is recommended that instructors make notes of student participation and work completed through Anecdotal Notes.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click the 'Link' to open and view videos.

To open and print files, please go to the 'files' folder accompanying this downloaded lesson plan.

Resource Title	Type
<b>Now That The Buffalo's Gone by Buffy Sainte-Marie</b>	Link 
One of Sainte-Marie's songs that have encouraged people to learn, to speak up, and to solve problems.	
<b>Ahtahkakoop: The Epic Account of a Plains Cree Head Chief, His People, and Their Struggle for Survival 1816-1896</b>	File (Ahtahkakoop Learns the Story of Buffalo Child.pdf) 
Christensen, D. 2000. <i>Ahtahkakoop: The Epic Account of a Plains Cree Head Chief, His People, and Their Struggle for Survival, 1816–1896</i> . (pp. 34-46) Shell Lake, Saskatchewan: Ahtahkakoop Publishing. ISBN 0-9687369-0-4	
<b>Buffalo People Arts Institute Videos</b>	Link 
<a href="#">Buffalo Hide Tanning and Teachings – Part 1 – Introducing Buffalo People Arts Institute</a> <a href="#">Buffalo Hide Tanning and Teachings – Part 2 – Making a Buffalo Bone Scraping Tool</a> <a href="#">Buffalo Hide Tanning and Teachings – Part 3 – Preparing the Buffalo Hide for Scraping</a> <a href="#">Buffalo Hide Tanning and Teachings – Part 4 – Scraping a Buffalo Hide</a> <a href="#">Buffalo Hide Tanning and Teachings – Part 5 – Dry Scraping the Epidermal Layer</a> <a href="#">Buffalo Hide Tanning and Teachings – Part 6 – Braining a Buffalo Hide</a> <a href="#">Buffalo Hide Tanning and Teachings – Part 7 – Smoking a Buffalo Hide</a>	

## HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

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<b>Relationship with the land</b>
This lesson is about having a relationship to the Bison and the land on which Indigenous Peoples have lived together with in harmony. Bison took care of the prairie ecological system, Indigenous Peoples needed the Bison for their way of life, it was a balancing act that involved respect, care, and love for all on the land.
<b>Participatory and experiential learning activities</b>
<b>Language and Culture</b>
N/A
<b>Relationship with family, ancestors</b>

This is the story of the child who is adopted and raised by the buffalo, but then faces internal conflict which in the end, he turns into a rock. Buffalo Child, a boy who thinks he is a bison, shares his connection, his feelings, and thoughts with his family - *all of his relations*.

#### Connections are made with everyday life

Learning the story of Buffalo Child can be a part of everyday living, in how we make choices for ourselves. Let's take into consideration the following questions:

- What is/feels best for oneself?
- What is one's position in relation to morals and personal ethics about life?
- How far will one go to protect and be responsible for all life?

For example, in the story of the Buffalo Child, he chose to be a bison stone in order to memorialize of what the bison sacrifice for the human beings. So in return, the human beings show respect.

#### Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders

Were Elders or Knowledge Holders involved in the development of this Lesson Plan? No  
Can Elders or Knowledge Holders be invited to help teach part of this lesson plan? Yes

#### Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders

#### Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit

#### Healthy relationship with self and identity

Students will connect to their land and connect to the bison by watching the Buffalo Hide Tanning and Teachings - Part 1 - Introducing Buffalo People Arts Institute and listening to the story of Buffalo Child.

#### Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)

Have students reflect on the story of *Buffalo Child* and any other teachings from Elders or influential people. Students will consider how these teachings have influenced their own worldviews. This can be done in a sharing circle or on sticky notes and shared in class.

## OTHER DETAILS

This Lesson Plan aims to meet curriculum expectations or outcomes for: Saskatchewan Yes

Unit Plan Title: Bison Unit: Lesson 1 of 5

Stream: General, Academic

## RELATED LESSON PLANS

- [Bison Unit: Lesson 2](#)
- [Bison Unit: Lesson 3](#)
- [Bison Unit: Lesson 4](#)
- [Bison Unit: Lesson 5](#)
- [An Elder's Tale](#)
- [Exploring the Past](#)
- [Our Land as a Learning Space](#)
- [Remembering the Journey of our Ancestors](#)

## CONTRIBUTORS

Name	Role/Job Title	Place
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## QUESTIONS/MORE DETAILS

For Questions contact: [Bettina Schneider \(bschneider@fnuniv.ca\)](mailto:bschneider@fnuniv.ca) for more information.