



WILD CLASSROOM

Conservation in the Classroom

Wolakota: The return of buffalo to the lands and lifeways of the Sicangu Lakota people

November 9, 2022

11:30 am ET / 8:30 am PT

Recommended grade levels: 4–8

Watch live on [Conservation in the Classroom](#)

View recording on the [Wild Classroom YouTube channel](#)



Sage Fast Dog

Founder and Director, Wakanyeja
Tokeyahci Wounspe Tipi
Lakota Nation

Sage Fast Dog Sr. is a member of the Sicangu Lakota Nation and lives on the land that is now known as the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. In his role as the founder and director of the Wakanyeja Tokeyahci Wounspe Tipi (Children First Learning Center), Sage incorporates important cultural values into everyday teachings so that Lakota students will learn the history, skills, and traditions of their people. In this presentation, Sage will share the richness of the Lakota language, history, and culture with viewers while explaining the significance of the recent efforts to return their relatives, the buffalo, to Lakota lands and the lifeways of their people.

BELL RINGER WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Help prepare your learners by introducing the topic with these warm-up questions.

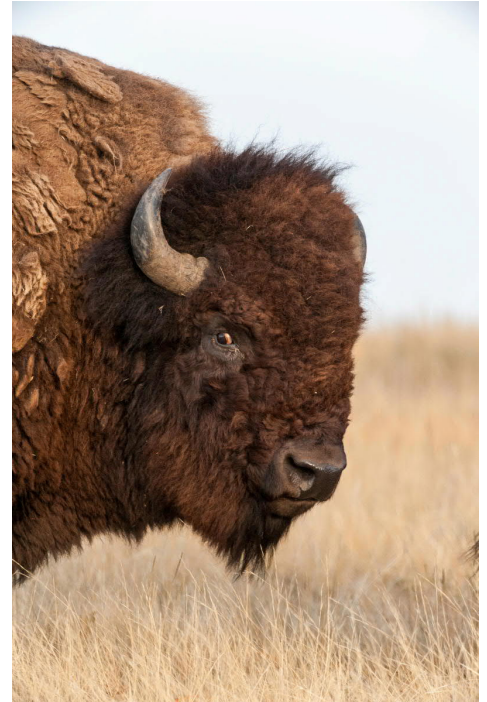
Identify

Name three things that bison (also referred to as buffalo by the Lakota Nation) have provided native people with throughout history:

-
-
-

Consider

Bison are important members of their ecosystem because they are **grazers**. What is a grazer? How does grazing help the environment?



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Explain

The Sicangu Lakota people believe that when the buffalo are healthy, the people are healthy. Why do you think that is?



Planning to watch the event live? Write your question(s) for the presenter here:

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

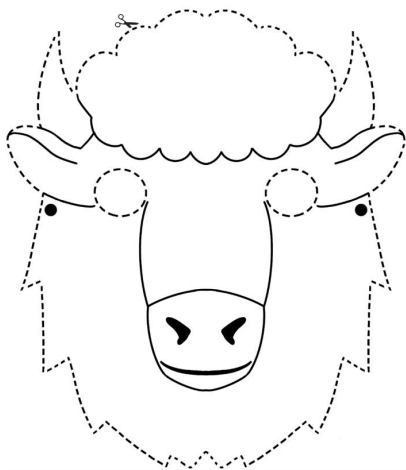
Use these web articles and videos to provide background information to your learners.

- Web article: [Everything is Connected](#)
- Web article: [The return of a relative: tribal communities in the Northern Great Plains rally around bison restoration](#)
- Web page: [Plains bison](#)
- Web page: [Rosebud buffalo](#)
- Web story: [Rosebud Sioux Tribe will create the largest native-owned and managed bison herd in North America](#)
- Web story: [Hopeful beginnings: first bison calves born on Wolakota Buffalo Range](#)
- Web story: [Buffalo People Unite](#)
- Web story: [Bison help to restore grasslands](#)
- Video: [Bison released onto the Wolakota Buffalo Range in South Dakota](#)
- Video: [The 7Gen Food System Vision](#)
- Video: [Buffalo story](#)



ACTIVITIES

Check out these lesson plans to supplement the content from the event.



[Strut Your Fluff bison mask](#)

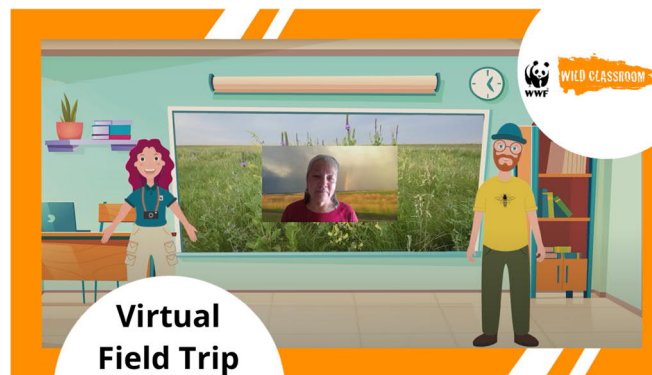
For this activity, found within the Grasslands and Pollinators activity book, students can use their imagination to create a colorful bison mask that resembles their own unique personality!

Grades 2–5

[Virtual field trip to the Northern Great Plains](#)

Explore the sights and sounds of the Northern Great Plains! Pair this video with our virtual field trip guide to have students learn about the abundant wildlife, plants, and people that make this region unique and so important.

Grades 3–8



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[The Roles We Play science activity](#)

Learners will participate in a role-playing activity about interdependence that demonstrates how living and non-living elements impact each other in the Northern Great Plains.

Grades 6–8

ASSESSMENTS

Conclude your lesson with these resources and fun assessment tools.

Kahoot!

- [All About Bison](#)
- [Explore the Northern Great Plains](#)

Answer key for Quick Quiz (next page)

- 1) Burnt-thigh
- 2) South Dakota
- 3) Unsustainable westward expansion
- 4) food
- 5) It's the largest native-managed bison herd in the world; it brought back and reconnected the spiritual relationship the people have with their relative, the buffalo; it has environmental, social, cultural, and economic benefits



© Sage Fast Dog



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Answer the following quiz questions and writing prompts after watching the Conservation in the Classroom event.

Quick Quiz

- 1) In the native Lakota language, what does “Sicangu” mean?

- 2) The land where Sage Fast Dog lives, which is now known as the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, is found in what US state?

- 3) What caused bison to be close to extinction?

- 4) The Lakota people were recognized for their 7Gen initiative that was an effort to restore traditions and teach people how to grow their own ____.

- 5) What makes the Wolakota Buffalo Range so important?

Short-answer writing prompts

6) In 2020, over 100 bison were released into the Rosebud-Sioux Reservation. These animals would later become part of North America’s largest native-owned bison herd. Prayers, songs, and offerings (including those pictured to the right) were presented by the community to the bison before they were released.

What do you think the significance of these acts and offerings was?



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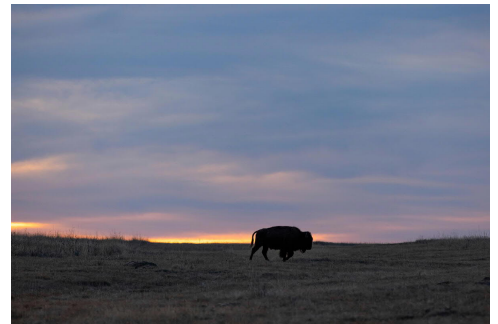
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7) The Rosebud Sioux Tribe's Child Care Program found that in the Rosebud Sioux reservation, only 502 people speak the native language. Almost all of these speakers are over the age of 70.

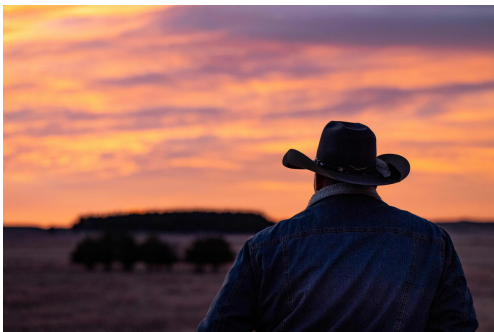
Why do you think it is important for younger generations to preserve the Lakota language?

8) Many Indigenous peoples, including the Sicangu Lakota, believe in a concept known as 7Gen or "Seven Generations." The 7Gen belief is that we have an obligation to consider seven generations into the future when making decisions.

Consider some of the decisions you make every day. Is there anything you would do differently if you knew it would impact seven generations of people, your relatives 175 years from now? Provide some examples.



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9) As Indigenous people, the Sicangu Lakota have a deep understanding of climate change and how it has affected their environment.

Why do you think Indigenous people are considered experts when it comes to their land? Explain why it's important to learn from them when considering climate change solutions.
