

# “Great Numbers of Buffalo”

## Standards

### Social Studies:

Geography: G2B511 The student identifies ways in which people depend on the physical environment (i.e. natural resources)

### Others:

## Objectives

### Knowledge:

- Learn that Lewis and Clark saw the first buffalo of the expedition while in Kansas and that buffalo were plentiful at that time.
- Understand the importance of the buffalo to Plains Indians.
- Learn how animals can become endangered.

### Skills:

- analyzing supply and demand
- drawing conclusions
- reading charts

## Focus Questions

1. Why did Plains Indians rely so heavily on the buffalo?
2. Why and how did the buffalo become an endangered species?

## Assessment

- worksheet “Buffalo Populations: Then and Now”

## Lesson Plan Outline

### A. Illustrated Story

1. Use the images and text on the four images to tell the story about the plight of the buffalo in the 1800s—from abundant to endangered.
2. Reinforce the importance and diversity of uses of the buffalo to the Plains Indians by sharing the buffalo items in the trunk (hide, sinew, flesher, bladder, and moccasin).
3. Have students complete the worksheet “Buffalo Populations: Then and Now.”

### Trunk Materials

- 4 images (Graphics 3-6)
- Tanned hide with fur
- Sinew
- Bone flesher
- Buffalo bladder
- Moccasin



# The Buffalo: A Valuable Resource

Plains Indians had many uses for the buffalo. This list provides uses for the items included in the *Corps of Discovery Trunk*.

## **Tanned hide with fur:**

- winter clothing
- gloves
- bedding
- clothing
- ceremonial or decoy clothing

If the fur was removed, the tanned hide could be used for clothing, tipi covers and linings, moccasins, bedding, bags, and things that used a soft leather.

Rawhide (hide that is not tanned/softened) could be used for cooking utensils, saddles, horseshoes, soles of moccasins, cradles, drumheads, rattles, parfleches (carrying containers), shields, cups, and things that required a stiff leather.

## **Sinew:** (This is connective tissue or muscle.)

- thread for sewing
- bowstrings
- snowshoe webbing

## **Hide Flesher**

- bone tool used in scraping fur and meat from hides during the tanning process.

## **Moccasin**

- tanned hide sewn together with sinew.

## **Bladder**

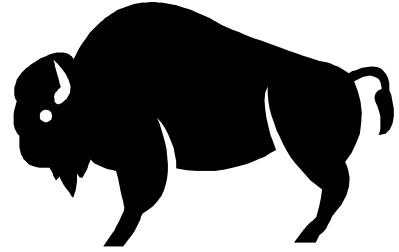
- used as a container for carrying or storing liquids, like a canteen.



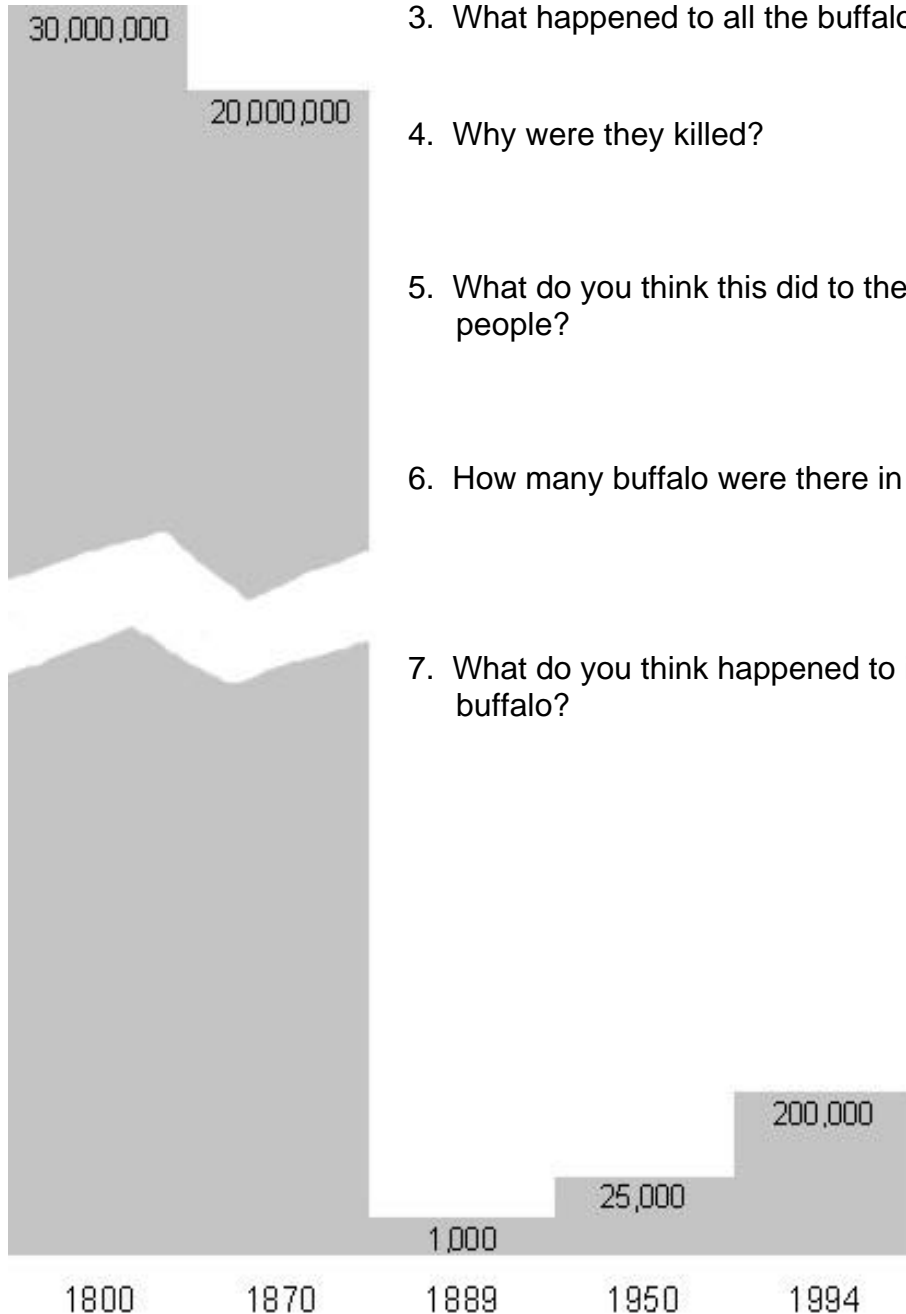
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## Buffalo Populations: Then and Now

Use the chart on this page and the images in this lesson to answer the following questions.



1. What was the buffalo population in 1800?
2. What was the buffalo population in 1889?



3. What happened to all the buffalo?
4. Why were they killed?
5. What do you think this did to the Native American people?
6. How many buffalo were there in 1994?
7. What do you think happened to increase the number of buffalo?

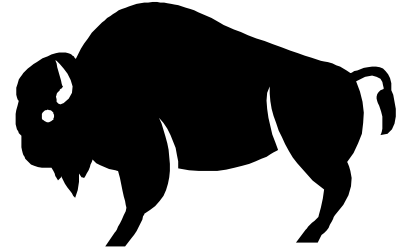
This chart is not to scale. To be totally accurate, the bar for 30,000,000 buffalo would have to be the length of a football field and the bar for 1,000 buffalo would be 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an inch.



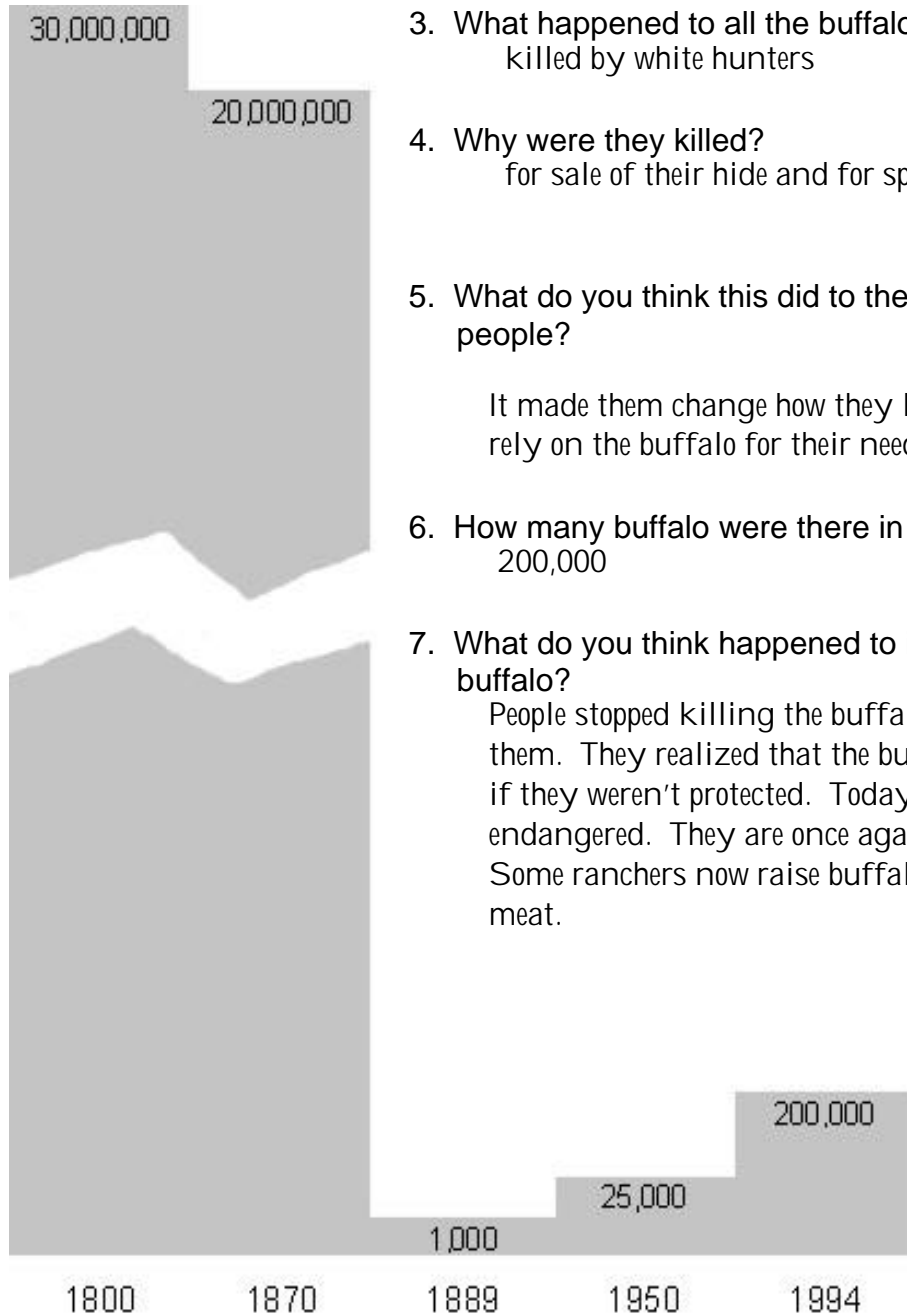
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## Buffalo Populations: Then and Now

Use the chart on this page and the images in this lesson to answer the following questions.



1. What was the buffalo population in 1800?  
30 million
2. What was the buffalo population in 1889?  
1,000



3. What happened to all the buffalo?  
killed by white hunters

4. Why were they killed?  
for sale of their hide and for sport

5. What do you think this did to the Native American people?

It made them change how they lived. They could no longer rely on the buffalo for their needs.

6. How many buffalo were there in 1994?  
200,000

7. What do you think happened to increase the number of buffalo?  
People stopped killing the buffalo and started to protect them. They realized that the buffalo would become extinct if they weren't protected. Today, buffalo are no longer endangered. They are once again being used for food. Some ranchers now raise buffalo instead of cattle for their meat.

This chart is not to scale. To be totally accurate, the bar for 30,000,000 buffalo would have to be the length of a football field and the bar for 1,000 buffalo would be 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an inch.

