



Bison as Shelter

Grade Levels: 5-8

Time: 45 minutes

Lesson Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

1. Measure area
2. Understand how bison hides were used as shelter
3. Describe the differences and similarities in our homes today from traditional homes like tipis

Materials

- String
- Stone scraper (optional, trunk item)
- Bison shoulder blade (optional, images)
- Photographs of traditional hide tanning (optional, trunk item)

Standards

SS.5.5.4, SS.5.5.4a

Vocabulary

Area: the space occupied by a flat shape or the surface of an object.

Tepee (tipi): A portable tent used by Native American tribes of the Plains and Great Lakes regions



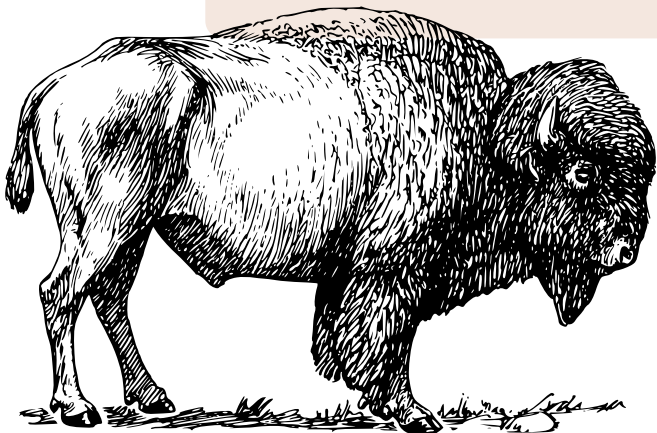
Introduction (15 minutes)

1. Ask students, "What qualities does a home have? These are qualities your homes have, but what qualities does our classroom also have?" Record responses to revisit at the end of the lesson plan.
 - a. Examples: water tight/water resistant, air flow, warm/heated, spacious, spaces dedicated to specific tasks
2. Go through the "Bison of the Bighorn Basin" virtual exhibit slide on the material uses of bison with the class.
3. When students get to the "Shelter" slide of the Material Uses, tell students, "We're going to see how big one bison hide is."

Procedure (15 minutes)

1. A typical bison hide measures 36 - 40 square feet. If we're going to make a string outline, what do its dimensions need to be?
 - a. Length x width = area
2. Have students measure out this distance in the classroom or outside and stand around that area.
 - a. Can have students measure a string inside that is 36- 40 feet long, tie the two ends of the string together and have all students hold on to the string and walk backwards until it is fully extended.
3. 15 to 20 bison hides would make one tepee (if you have a class of about this size, you can tell them that one hide per student would make up one shelter).

Optional: Have students multiply the bison hide area by the number of hides to figure out how large that would be. How does that area compare to a football field? Gym? The classroom?



Wrap-Up (15 minutes)

1. Pass around the bison hide fragment from the education trunk for students to feel how thick the hide is.
2. Ask students, "How do you think a tepee or other forms of shelter made from bison hide compare with your home?" Go through the criteria to see where there are similarities or differences.

Extension/Enrichment

Turning Hides into Shelter

- The hides would have to be "processed" so they could be used for shelter. This included scraping the hides so there was no flesh that would rot and stink. They had to tan the hides so they would be flexible to fit over the poles used.
- Show students the photo set "Turning Hides into Shelter". Have students lay the photos out in order from start to finish of a tanned hide.

Separation of Space

Use the "Explore a Site" and explore the Bugas- Holding site on the "Bison of the Bighorn Basin" virtual exhibit to show students how spaces were separated even when there was one large dwelling.

