

Let US Teach That For You!

Commercial Buffalo Hunting

Overview: This activity introduces buffalo hunting as big business in early Texas, from the perspective of the buffalo hunter.

Objectives

Students will

1. Understand how buffalo hunting shaped the history of Texas.
2. Compare/contrast the different work involved in buffalo hunting.
3. Use creativity to make a trading card.

Materials

Educational Materials Provided by Frontier Texas!

Spirit Guide Moorar (22), Rotators (20), (23)

Materials Needed

Copies of Attachments 1-3

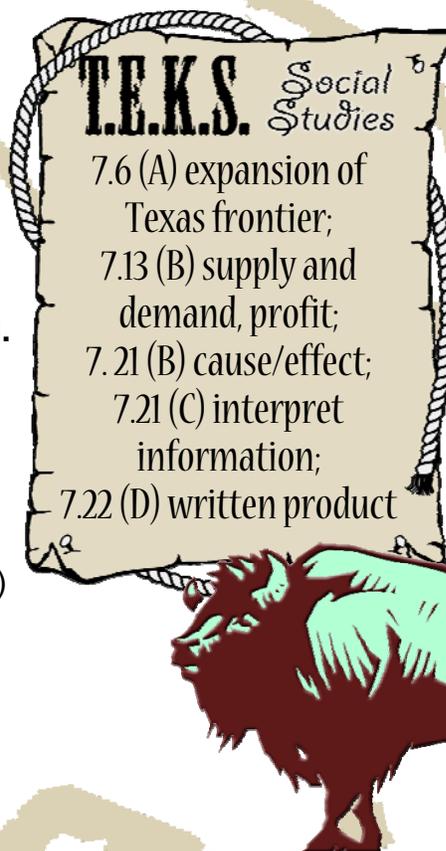
Teaching Strategy

Pre-visit Introduction

1. Read and discuss "Buffalo Facts" (Attachment 1). Analyze the quote
2. *"To us, the buffalo was more than an animal. It was the stuff of life...no animal gave so much to the people."*
3. Do we have anything comparable today, on which our society depends?

Museum Instruction

1. Upon arriving at Frontier Texas! notice the large buffalo sculpture in front of the museum. Conduct a discussion of this sculpture using the following questions:
 - a. What can we learn from a work of art?
 - b. What is he facing?
 - c. What does his expression tell us?
 - d. What happened to him with the coming of the buffalo hunters?
 - e. What impact did the extermination of the buffalo have on the Plains Indians?
 - f. What economic opportunities were exploited by the buffalo hunters?



2. Inside the museum, point out the size of the buffaloes in the displays (8) and (9). Topics for onsite discussion include why they were called “shaggies” and how much people might be willing to pay for one of those hides or all that meat.
3. Pay careful attention to what J. Wright Mooar (Spirit Guide, (22) says about getting into the buffalo hunting business. Compare his entrepreneurship to that of Michael Dell.
4. Instruct students to read about the jobs involved in buffalo hunting, the shooters, the skinners, the suppliers, freighters, and bone traders from Rotators 20 and 23. They should be able to describe each job, how much each was paid, and what made them successful in their job. Students will complete the questions on Attachment 2.
5. Students will view the famous buffalo gun at Rotator 23. On-site discussion might include:
 - a. What were the best years for buffalo hunters? (1876-1879)
 - b. What were the main hide towns in this area? (Fort Griffin [Albany], Buffalo Gap, and Snyder)

Post-visit Synthesis Activity

6. Students will compare the jobs involved with buffalo hunting and decide which one would be most interesting. Possibilities include:
 - a. Shooters
 - b. Skinners
 - c. Suppliers
 - d. Bone trader
7. Each student will create a trading card (Attachment 3) for the job they are most interested in, including the facts gathered at Frontier Texas! and any other information they have. On the shaded portion of the card, students should create a symbol or graphic to represent that job. Information is to be included on the other side in bulleted form.

Student Assessment

Assess student understanding by the amount of information on the trading card.

Enrichment Activity

Research the modern bison industry at <http://www.bisoncentral.com/> and the Triple U Buffalo Ranch website at http://www.tripleuranch.com/htm/buffalo_facts.shtml

Created for Frontier Texas! by Jeanne Wray

Buffalo Facts

FRONTIER *Texas!*



Bountiful Buffalo Hunting the Beast of Plenty

“To us, the buffalo was more than an animal. It was the stuff of life...no animal gave so much to the people.”

First Boy, Assiniboine

Plains Indian culture coincided with the range of the buffalo. Nomadic tribes who depended on the beast for survival followed the great herds as they roamed the western landscape in search of grasses and water.

_ A mature buffalo bull weighs approximately 2,000 pounds while a grown buffalo cow weighs about 1,100 pounds.

_ Buffalo can run at speeds up to 35 miles per hour—three times faster than a human, but slower than a good horse.

_ All buffalo have horns, which grow in yearly “rings” that can be used to tell an animal’s age. On average, buffalo live 20-25 years.

_ It is estimated that in prehistoric times, 60 million or more buffalo roamed the Great Plains.

_ The Plains Indians consumed an average of three pounds of buffalo meat per person per day.

_ Indians believed that killing buffalo for sport or pleasure was wasteful and an insult to the Great Spirit.



Buffalo Hunter Trading Cards

Collect the following information from “Buffalo Hunting” Rotator (20) and “World’s Most Famous Buffalo Gun” Rotator 23 to be used to create a trading card for the different occupations.

Shooters

1. How many buffalo could be killed in one day? _____
2. What type of guns were used? _____
3. How long would a team be camped? _____
4. How much ammunition was needed? _____

Skinner

1. How many buffalo could a good skinner skin in one day? _____
2. How were the buffalo moved? _____
3. How much could a good skinner make in a month? _____
4. What happened to the buffalo meat? _____

Suppliers

1. What supplies were sold to buffalo hunters? _____
2. What town became the base of operations for buffalo hunting in this area? _____
3. How were the hides shipped to market? _____

Bone Traders

1. Name three things that buffalo bones were used for.

2. How were the bones transported to markets in the East? _____
3. What was the average price for a ton of buffalo bones? _____

Trading Cards

