**American Democracy: The Yellowstone Bison**

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**Language Arts Lesson Plan**

**Lesson Description**

Students will be looking into the current issues with Bison, brucellosis, and land use as a way to learn advocacy techniques and democratic debate. Students need to learn how to communicate effectively both in the written and spoken word so that they can have a voice in the democratic process.

**Introduction**

In composition class, the students are developing their writing skills in a variety of contexts. Students need to see how writing and communication can take place in the real world. They also need to know and understand how to get their voice heard. In order that we have a true democracy, all citizens need to speak their opinions effectively. This lesson teaches these skills within the context of the Yellowstone bison. They will gain a better understanding of how the democratic process happens and how they can fit in that.

First students will gain information on the issues and the stakeholders involved in the debate through a powerpoint and video clip (<http://www.indstate.edu/publiclanduse/videos.htm> ). Then students will be broken into groups and assigned a stakeholder role. The group will then research information on their stance, write a proposal, create a variety of written persuasive pieces, and prepare for a debate. The unit will end with a entire class role-playing debate.

**Concepts**

History of the Bison and Native Americans

Bison's Importance as a Keystone Species

Ecological Cascade

Explanation of Brucellosis

Economic Understanding of Common Goods

Conflict over Land Usage

Advocacy

Business and Persuasive Writing

Democratic Dialogue

**Content Standards**

CMP 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 2.3, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2

**Objectives**

Student will be able to (SWBAT) understand the historic and current issues surrounding the bison.

SWBAT write a proposal based on a given researched perspective.

SWBAT create multiple written persuasive documents.

SWBAT peer edit and revise writings.

SWBAT participate effectively in a democratic dialogue.

**Time Required**

Seven block class periods (90 minutes per session)

**Materials Needed**

Powerpoint - "American Bison: Then and Now", by Curts, Shover, and Symons, (http://www.indstate.edu/publiclanduse/Instructional%20Powerpoints.htm)

Video - "Bison Land Use", (<http://www.indstate.edu/publiclanduse/videos.htm>)

Computer

Projector

Research Worksheet

Handouts for writings

Peer Editing Sheets

Meeting Notes Page

Student Computers

Printer

**Procedures**

Day One: Develop background information through powerpoint and video. Students will then write a paragraph on their current views. Divide students into groups after class.

Day Two: Introduce the different groups to the class. They will then begin research within their groups by filling out the research worksheet.

Day Three: Explain the written proposal. Pass out an outline and a sample. Students will write proposal based on research and worksheet from previous class.

Day Four: The different options of persuasive writings will be explained. Groups will be required to complete a different writing type for each group member. They will have work time to complete the writings. Meet with and check in with each groups.

Day Five: Students will have more time to complete writings. Meet with groups.

Day Six: Students will peer edit within groups. They will then be given a chance to make corrections to writings. This will be the last chance for stakeholder groups to prepare for democratic discussion.

Day Seven: Inter-agency meeting: each group must present their stance and respond to others. The goal is to come up with a plan that everyone can agree to. After the discussion, each individual will write a response on preparation before the meeting and the meeting itself.

**Activities**

The main activity of this unit is the end meeting between all stakeholder groups. Each group will be prepare to present their proposal. The other groups will respond to the proposal with their conflicts or agreements. They will try to work towards a conclusion without giving up what they find as important to their group. They will have to be persuasive while also realizing the struggle in how these issues are “solved.”

**Assessment**

Students will be graded on their proposal, persuasive writings, and participation in the meeting. The rubrics are based on the six traits of writing. Rubrics are attached for more information. Since this project will be completed at the end of the semester, this will count as their final exam.

**Extensions**

After the meeting, the students will reflect on their original stance on the issue and their current stance. They will also reflect on the democratic debate and role-playing process.

**Interdisciplinary Features**

ENV 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.27

E 3.3, 8.1

**Research Worksheet**

Group \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions as your group researches your position.

What are your group's goal for the bison?

Why do you want that goal?

What science do you have to back up your position?

Who would agree with you and why?

Who would disagree with you and why?

What common ground do you have with your opposition?

Why is your opposition wrong?

How can you get them to your side?

Make sure that you fully understand the answer to each of these questions. Next class you will be writing a group proposal putting together all of these ideas. In this proposal you will want to make sure to present your group's position and support it fully. You will also be expected to provide a solution and the rational for that solution. The group's proposal should be a strong three paragraphs that drives the focus of your group and your message.

**Press Release**

Start with a headline. Next list the date and city that the press release originated. The first sentence should grab the reader's attention, and the rest of the release expands on that. Focus on the 5 W's: Who, What, When, Where, and Why. In your press release, explain the meeting that is going to take place as well as your group's proposal. Include information on your stakeholder group and the other groups that will be at the meeting. This should be double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, one full page release. End with contact information. After your last line of text, type three # as seen below.

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**Magazine Article**

Start with a headline. Next list the author and date written. The magazine article will be more personal interest based than the press release. This will be single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, one full page. You can include one or two pictures with captions as long as they add to the story rather than take away. You are to tell a story that will persuade others to agree with your group. Base your story off of something real, but be creative and add your own details since you didn't actual experience the story.

**Website Homepage**

You are redoing the organization's website. Consider what you would want to include on that homepage to grab attention. Use pictures and “links” of what is most important. Have a couple of links to stories or sites that you have provided a brief summary of that site. Use the computer program you are most comfortable with, but focus on an eye-catching layout for one page. Include contact information for your organization at the bottom of the page and links at either the top or the left hand side.

**Transcript of Interview**

Pretend that you are being interviewed by someone in the press as a representative of your organization. First come up with questions that you think that person would ask you. Then type your responses. Make sure to be as persuasive as possible. Present legitimate information. This will be good practice for the meeting. Include a space between each speaker. Times New Roman, 12 pt font, one page. Make sure to identify the speaker as seen below.

Jane Doe: What does your group want?

Megan Smith: Everything.

JD: How do you plan on doing that?

MS: By talking to everyone.

**Persuasive Writing Peer Editing**

Writer's Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Peer Editor's Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Writing Type \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Did this writing capture the group's message? If not, what was left out?

Does this piece follow the given format? If not, what corrections need to be made?

Has this piece captured the heart and passion of the group? If no, how could this be added?

Mark spelling, grammar, and punctuation corrections on the page.

What are three strong points in this piece?

What are three areas to improve this piece?

**Meeting Notes**

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Take brief notes on everyone's presentations. Jot down issues that your group would have with this group to guide your responses.

**National Park Service**

**Buffalo Field Campaign**

**Cattle Ranchers**

**Native Americans**

On the back of this page, write your response after the meeting. Consider the following questions. How has your view changed through this process? What do you believe should be done now? What did you think about the other groups' presentations? How do you think the meeting went?

**Proposal Rubric**

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas and Content

Presentation of Position \_\_\_\_/5

Support of Position \_\_\_\_/5

Presentation of Solution \_\_\_\_/5

Rational of Solution \_\_\_\_/5

Format \_\_\_\_/5

**Total \_\_\_\_/25**

**Proposal Rubric**

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas and Content

Presentation of Position \_\_\_\_/5

Support of Position \_\_\_\_/5

Presentation of Solution \_\_\_\_/5

Rational of Solution \_\_\_\_/5

Format \_\_\_\_/5

**Total \_\_\_\_/25**

**Proposal Rubric**

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas and Content

Presentation of Position \_\_\_\_/5

Support of Position \_\_\_\_/5

Presentation of Solution \_\_\_\_/5

Rational of Solution \_\_\_\_/5

Format \_\_\_\_/5

**Total \_\_\_\_/25**

**Proposal Rubric**

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas and Content

Presentation of Position \_\_\_\_/5

Support of Position \_\_\_\_/5

Presentation of Solution \_\_\_\_/5

Rational of Solution \_\_\_\_/5

Format \_\_\_\_/5

**Total \_\_\_\_/25**

**Stakeholder Meeting Notes and Rubric**

Group Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes

Participation \_\_\_\_/10

Characterization \_\_\_\_/10

Persuasion \_\_\_\_/10

Quality of Information \_\_\_\_/10

Reflection \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/50**

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes

Participation \_\_\_\_/10

Characterization \_\_\_\_/10

Persuasion \_\_\_\_/10

Quality of Information \_\_\_\_/10

Reflection \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/50**

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes

Participation \_\_\_\_/10

Characterization \_\_\_\_/10

Persuasion \_\_\_\_/10

Quality of Information \_\_\_\_/10

Reflection \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/50**

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes

Participation \_\_\_\_/10

Characterization \_\_\_\_/10

Persuasion \_\_\_\_/10

Quality of Information \_\_\_\_/10

Reflection \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/50**

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes

Participation \_\_\_\_/10

Characterization \_\_\_\_/10

Persuasion \_\_\_\_/10

Quality of Information \_\_\_\_/10

Reflection \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/50**

**Persuasive Writing Rubric**

Group Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Writer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Type \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas and Content

Presentation of Group's Position \_\_\_\_/15

Format

Followed format given \_\_\_\_/10

Voice

Captured passion and heart of group \_\_\_\_/10

Convention

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/45**

Ideas and Content

Presentation of Group's Position \_\_\_\_/15

Format

Followed format given \_\_\_\_/10

Voice

Captured passion and heart of group \_\_\_\_/10

Convention

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/45**

Ideas and Content

Presentation of Group's Position \_\_\_\_/15

Format

Followed format given \_\_\_\_/10

Voice

Captured passion and heart of group \_\_\_\_/10

Convention

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/45**

Ideas and Content

Presentation of Group's Position \_\_\_\_/15

Format

Followed format given \_\_\_\_/10

Voice

Captured passion and heart of group \_\_\_\_/10

Convention

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling \_\_\_\_/10

**Total \_\_\_\_/45**