

## Lesson Title: What is Rangeland?

*Brief: Students will learn what a rangeland is and how much of Montana is rangeland. They will create a collage and listen to poetry about rangelands.*

*Grade: 4-6*

*Duration of Lesson: 2 45-minute periods*

### ***Materials:***

Magazines with scenic/outdoors/rangeland photos

Book: Spurrin' the Words Leader's Guide. Compiled by The Montana 4-H Center for the Cowboy Poetry Project

Attached poem, "Buffalo Trail"

Scissors

Glue

Poster board

Useful Website: Cowboy Poetry Samples, Writers, etc: <http://cowboypoeetry.com/>

Useful Website: Montana Kids- Rangelands:

[http://montanakids.com/agriculture\\_and\\_business/farm\\_and\\_Ranch\\_land/Ranch\\_Land.htm](http://montanakids.com/agriculture_and_business/farm_and_Ranch_land/Ranch_Land.htm)

### ***Key Terms***

Rangeland, prairies, plains, steppes, savannas, grasslands, deserts, tundras, and wetlands

### Standards / Objectives

#### **Arts Content Standard 1: Students create, perform/exhibit, and respond in the Arts.**

1. Create a work from their own ideas and images based on themes, symbols, events and personal experiences.

#### **Arts Content Standard 6: Students make connections among the Arts, other subject areas, life, and work.**

2. Utilize interrelated elements among the Arts and other subject areas.

#### **ELA Common Core: 4-6. Writing**

**Text Types and Purposes 3.** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

#### **ELA Common Core: 4-6. Writing**

**Production and Distribution Writing 4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Social Studies Content Standard 3: Students apply geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., location, place, human/environment interactions, movement, and regions).** 2. Locate on a map or globe physical features (e.g., continents, oceans, mountain ranges, land forms) natural features (e.g., flora, fauna) and human features (e.g., cities, states, national borders) and explain their relationships within the ecosystem. **End of Grade 8.**

**Social Studies Content Standard 4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.** 1. Interpret the past using a variety of sources (e.g., biographies, documents, diaries, eyewitnesses, interviews, internet, primary source material) and evaluate the credibility of sources used. **End of Grade 8.**

<p><u>Understanding(s) /Big Ideas:</u> 70% of Montana is considered rangeland. It is important to know what this land is used for and what types of plant and animals species live there.</p>	<p><u>Essential Question(s):</u> What is rangeland? How is rangeland used? What types of plants and animal species live on the rangeland?</p>
<p><u>Students will know:</u> What a rangeland is and how big of a part of Montana is rangeland. What plant and animal species live on the rangeland.</p>	<p><u>Students will be able to:</u> Explain what is rangeland is—including some plants and animals that live there.</p>
<p><b>Performance / Observations</b></p>	
<p><u>Performance Task(s):</u> Students will create a rangeland collage and write a rangeland poem.</p>	<p><u>Other Evidence:</u> Student have an opportunity to take pictures of the rangeland.</p>
<p><b>Learning / Inquiry Activities</b></p>	

**Introduction:** The term “rangeland” came about in the 1800’s and used to refer to the large unforested parts of western United States. Today, this term is much broader and includes landforms such as: prairies, plains, steppes, savannas, grasslands, deserts, tundras, and wetlands. Rangelands today are used for recreational activities such as skiing, horseback riding, hiking, camping, and hunting. They also are used for non-recreational activities such as grazing and mining. Montana is a rangeland. Rangeland is all around us, and approximately 70% of Montana is rangeland—grasses and shrubs dominate 58% of this and 12% are classified as graze-able woodland. The four major kinds of plants that make up Montana’s rangeland are: grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, and shrubs.

**Learning / Inquiry Activities:**

1. Ask students what they think a rangeland is? Have them free write for a few minutes on what they think makes up a rangeland. They can read what they wrote to the class.
2. Tell students what rangelands are, discuss what kind of landforms can be in a rangeland, uses of rangelands, and the role of rangelands in Montana (percent of Montana that is rangeland, etc.).
3. Read the poem, “The Buffalo Trail” from the Spurrin’ the Words Leader’s Guide to the

students or have them take turns reading the poem. Discuss what images they formed in their minds throughout the poem.

4. Have them create their own rangeland poem. Poems can be 4 lines and up, and they should reflect what the students think of when they hear the word “rangeland.”
5. Have students cut pictures out of provided magazines to make their own “mini-rangeland.” Have them include everything they think makes up a rangeland (plants, scenery, animals, water, activities done on rangelands, etc.) Provide each student with a small poster board, glue, scissors, and markers or colored pencils if they wish.
6. Have each student talk about why they put in the pictures they did and what a rangeland means to them. Students can also read their poems to the class at this time. Collages and poems can later be hung up in the classroom.
7. Another option which may be used is to have a “Rangeland Photo Contest.” Have each student (with the help of their parents if needed), take a picture of the outdoors and bring it to class. Photos can be judged anonymously by the class or each picture may be hung in the classroom along with the collages and poems.

We invite you to send photos or information on your experience teaching the lesson to the Montana Department of Agriculture’s Ag in the Classroom [lbrenneman@mt.gov](mailto:lbrenneman@mt.gov)

*This lesson was adapted from Agriculture in Montana Schools, [aginmontanaschools.com](http://aginmontanaschools.com)*

## The Buffalo Trail

Deeply the buffalo trod it  
Beating it barren as brass;  
Now the soft rain fingers sod it,  
Green to the crest of the pass.  
Backward it slopes into history;  
Forward it lifts into mystery.  
Here is but wind in the grass.  
Backward the millions assemble,  
Bannered with dust overhead,  
Setting the prairie a-tremble,  
Under the might of their tread.  
Forward the sky-line is glistening  
And to the reach of our listening  
Drifts not a sound from the dead.  
Quick, or swift seasons fade it!  
Look on his works while they show.  
This is the bison. He made it.  
Thus say the old ones who know.  
This is the bison—a-pondering  
Vague as the prairie wind wanderings  
Over the green or the snow.

*From Sun and Saddle Leather, Boston: Mount Vernon Press, 1936*

*By: Badger Clark*

*Found in the Book, Spurrin' the Words Leader's Guide*