

# Buffalo Economy and Red River Carts

## Lesson 3

### Guiding Question for the Lesson

- How did the Métis and their Red River carts contribute to the buffalo economy?

### Standards

#### Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

EU 1 There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

#### Social Studies Standards

SS.E.6-8.1 Explain how economic decisions impact individuals, businesses, and society, including Indigenous societies.

SS.E.6-8.3 Explain the roles of producers and consumers in market systems.

SS.G.6-8.3 Analyze maps and charts from a specific time period to understand an issue or event.

SS.H.6-8.2 Analyze how the historical events relate to one another and are shaped by historical context, including societies in the Americas.

### Materials

[The Métis and Red River Carts](#), North Dakota Studies, State Historical Society of North Dakota.

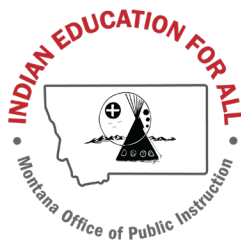
### Length

One class period

### Steps

#### Step One

Prior to sharing the guiding question for the lesson, ask students to think back over the first two lessons and make a prediction about how they might overlap to arrive at this one. Ask them to write their prediction at the top of a page. You can now show them the guiding question and ask if it is close to what they predicted. If it is, they can let their prediction stay. If it is significantly different, they should add the guiding question to the top of their page (but not cross out the prediction, in case they find support for that too.)



## Step Two

Provide the text from the North Dakota Studies. This text is written for fourth graders so it may be a little simpler than your students are used to. It also has embedded vocabulary which may distract your students or be helpful to them. You may choose (or need) to print the resource for your students.

Using whatever reading strategy you know works best with your students, ask them to read the piece while making notes on their page of evidence or details to support their prediction and/or answer the guiding question. You might stop along the way if reading aloud and ask for input or walk around the room if students are reading to themselves. You could stop midway and ask everyone to do a quick sharing of their notes with a partner in the room. You might also recommend students read the piece twice, to look for themes or details that escaped them the first time.

## Step Three

Engage students in a historical cause-and-effect discussion. You might focus on questions like: “What led to the invention of the carts?” “How did geography promote the development of these carts?” “What did the carts allow the Métis to accomplish?” “What led to so much interest in buffalo [from Europeans]?” Try to use cause-and-effect as a framework to revisit the material in the text. This will help meet the standard SS.G.6-8.3 on maps and SS.H.6-8.2 on the interactions among historical events.

## Assessment

If students began with a prediction that closely resembled the guiding question, they should use the notes they took during the reading and anything else they might have written to construct a summary of the information, thereby answering the guiding question. If they had a different prediction, ask them to write an explanation, using details from their notes, of how the prediction was not accurate. This should help demonstrate they understood the text enough to recognize what it was about.

## Extension Options

The lesson activities in this lesson focused on transportation and goods. One extension option could be a study of transportation methods throughout time, including carts like this one, travois, other pre-wheel transportation methods, all the way through today with air and sea travel, train and truck transportation, and anything else they can think of.

This lesson also focuses on basic economics. You could teach a lesson on supply/demand, prices, cost of goods, and more. Visit the social studies standards for more guidance.