# Producing a Wild West Show

## Lesson Overview:

Students will use the Virtual Tour and several other sources to explore Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show and determine the show might operate today.

## Grade Level:

Grades 4-8

## Objectives:

1. Students will develop skills in planning.
2. Students will develop skills in mathematics.
3. Students will gain an understanding of how things change over time.

## Nebraska State Standards:

## Social Studies

SS 4.3.1.b Apply map skills to analyze physical/political maps of the state.

SS 4.4.2 Analyze and explain multiple perspectives of events in Nebraska, including historically marginalized and underrepresented groups.

SS 4.4.3.b Identify key events in American history that shaped or were shaped by Nebraskans.

SS 7.4.1.a Analyze the impact of people, events, and ideas, including various cultures and ethnic groups, on the world.

SS 7.4.5.c Gather, analyze, and communicate historical information about the world from multiple sources.

SS 8.4.5.c Gather, analyze, and communicate historical information about United States history from multiple sources.

SS HS.2.1.a Make decisions by systematically considering alternatives and consequences through the use of cost benefit analysis.

SS HS.3.5.a Apply geographic knowledge and skills to interpret the past and present in order to plan for the future.

SSHS.4.1 (US) Analyze and evaluate patterns of continuity and change over time in American history.

SS HS.4.5 (US) Apply the inquiry process to construct and answer historical questions.

SS HS.4.5.c (US) Select, organize, and corroborate relevant historical information about selected topics in U.S. History.

## Math

MA 4.1.2.a Add and subtract multi-digit numbers using the standard algorithm.

MA 4.1.2.b Multiply a four-digit whole number by a one-digit whole number.

MA 4.1.2.c Multiply a two-digit whole number by a two-digit whole number using the standard algorithm.

## Materials Needed:

Access to computers with internet.

Handout: Producing the Wild West Show (best sent digitally to each student)

Handout: Outline map of the United Kingdom.

Suggested source: [Dreamstine Maps](https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-photos-outline-map-great-britain-image18378173)

## Suggested Procedure:

1. The teacher introduces students to the Virtual Tour of Buffalo Bill’s Ranch. The teacher can take students through aspects of the tour or allow the students to “take the tour” on their own. The teacher tells the students that need to find the posters advertising Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show. (Posters can be found in the Middle Section of the Barn.)
2. The teacher passes out the handout on Producing the Wild West Show and outline map of the United Kingdom. Students could work individually or in pairs.
3. The teacher oversees the students working through the project.
4. After the completion of the questions and the map, teacher has each student hand in completed work.
5. The teacher may extend the lesson by conducting a discussion over what the students concluded about Wild West shows.

## Extending the Lesson

Discuss the impact of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show in Europe. What impression did the spectators walk away with concerning: cowboys; women; Native Americans; and the American West?

Discuss if it would be possible or advisable to try to do a wild west show in Europe today.

## Assessment:

The student’s work on map and questions.

## Suggested resources:

For a map of the U.K.

## [Free World Maps](https://www.freeworldmaps.net/europe/united-kingdom/pdf.html)

## Various sources for the Cody’s Shows in Great Britain

[The History Press Buffalo Bill’s British Wild West](https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/buffalo-bill-s-british-wild-west/)

[This Day in History Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show Opens](https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/buffalo-bills-wild-west-show-opens)

[That Time Buffalo Bill Rode for Royalty](https://www.codyyellowstone.org/blog/that-time-buffalo-bill-rode-for-royalty/)

[Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show came to Horfield](https://historyofhorfieldcommon.weebly.com/buffalo-bill.html)

[National Fairground and Circus Archive Buffalo Bill](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/nfca/researchandarticles/buffalobill)

## Various sources relating to transporting animals

[Federal Circus Bill Use of Animals Summary](https://www.federalcircusbill.org/briefings/worldwide-summary/)

[Transporting Animals to Zoos and Aquariums](https://ifa-forwarding.net/blog/intermodal-transport-in-europe/transporting-animals-to-zoos-and-aquariums/)

[Everything You Need to Know About Horse Transportation Cost](https://equinehelper.com/horse-transportation-cost/)

## Producing the Wild West Show

Place your answers on a sheet of paper (unless instructed to write answers on the map paper). Mark the top of the paper with the heading: “Producing the Wild West Show” with your name.

1. Use the posters in the Middle Section of the Barn to answer the following:
2. What continent was a destination of Buffalo Bill when he performed with Bullen’s Circus?
3. Buffalo Bill liked to feature “Rough Riders” from other places than the American West. Using the posters in this area, what is one area of the world where he pulled in other authentic performers?
4. Studying that same poster, what would be two species of animals that Buffalo Bill would need to put on a show?
5. Go to the following webpage: [America’s Story of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Shows](https://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/cody/aa_cody_show_3.html#:~:text=He's%20riding%20a%20bucking%20bronco,deer%2C%20bear%2C%20and%20moose)
6. According to this source, what were the different types of wild animals that were part of the performances?
7. Navigate to the first and second pages of this short web-article. Explain how Cody came up with the idea of the organizing and performing what became the Wild West Show.
8. You next task is to plan a tour for a Wild West Show in Great Britain for this year.
9. Cody took his show to several cities. Your task is to choose ten cities in Great Britain to take the show. You will need to have the potential of selling a lot of tickets.

Not only do you need think about selling tickets, but also keeping your travel expenses down.

You may use the website World Population Review to assist your planning:

[Population of Cities in United Kingdom for 2022](https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cities/united-kingdom)

Which cities did you choose? Write at least two sentences explaining your choices.

1. Using the outline map of the British Isles, make a map of your tour.
2. Plan the tour to take place in late summer during the months of July and August. Choose dates for the performances. Plan for two nights of performances at each stop and one matinee. As you plan, you need to consider travel time and what days would be best for ticket sales.

Write the dates and places of your tour on the back side of the map.

1. Compare your plan to the Buffalo Bill’s 1904 tour. (See map at: [Buffalo Bill Center of the West Seven Days in Glasgow with Buffalo Bill](https://centerofthewest.org/2020/07/02/points-west-glasgow-buffalo-bill-1/)).

Which tour, yours or the 1904, covers more of Great Britain?

Write a sentence reacting to or describing Buffalo Bill’s 1904 tour.

1. You need to choose what acts or performances you want to be part of the show. Below are some of the acts from Cody’s shows:
* Opening parade of riders
* Train Robbery
* Buffalo hunt
* Reenactment of Battle of the Little Bighorn
* Shooting performances
* Attack and burn a cabin
* Trick riding of horses
* Riding of wild horses
* Riding of wild animals
* Horses races

You should have the show last an hour and a half to two hours. Select from the above and add performances that you create.

Write out your schedule be sure to include the order and the time for each act.

1. How many people will you need to put on the show? (You will need to think about performers and people who do the behind-the-scenes setting up, dismantling, and helping transport to the next show.)

How many nights will you need to find hotel stays for your people?

Compute how much it will cost to get hotel rooms for the tour if it costs $50 per night per person.

1. Now, think about the transportation of the performers and the animals. You will need to get them from the U.S. to the United Kingdom. Buffalo Bill and his troupe went by ship. Often, the seas were rough and many suffered from seasickness. You will get to travel by air flight.
2. First determine how many horses you will take. Then determine what other animals you will take. Compute the expenses for a one-way trip. Plan on the horses costing $3,000 each to ship via plane and $6,000 for each of the wild animals. (Transport cost of getting the animals to the destination?
3. Next, you need to discover if you are allowed by today’s laws to use all of the animals in the show. Go to the Federal Circus Bill website:

[Federal Circus Bill Use of Animals Summary](https://www.federalcircusbill.org/briefings/worldwide-summary/)

What animals will you have to leave behind?

What acts will you need to eliminate?

1. Buffalo Bill charged as low as 5 and 10 cents for admission to the Show. What do you think you would charge and still have the show make money? Explain your answer.
2. There would be many more expenses to putting on this show. What are two expenses that you have not been asked to compute?
3. Write a short paragraph explaining if you think it would be possible to put on a Wild West Show in the modern era. Back up or conclusions with as information as you can.