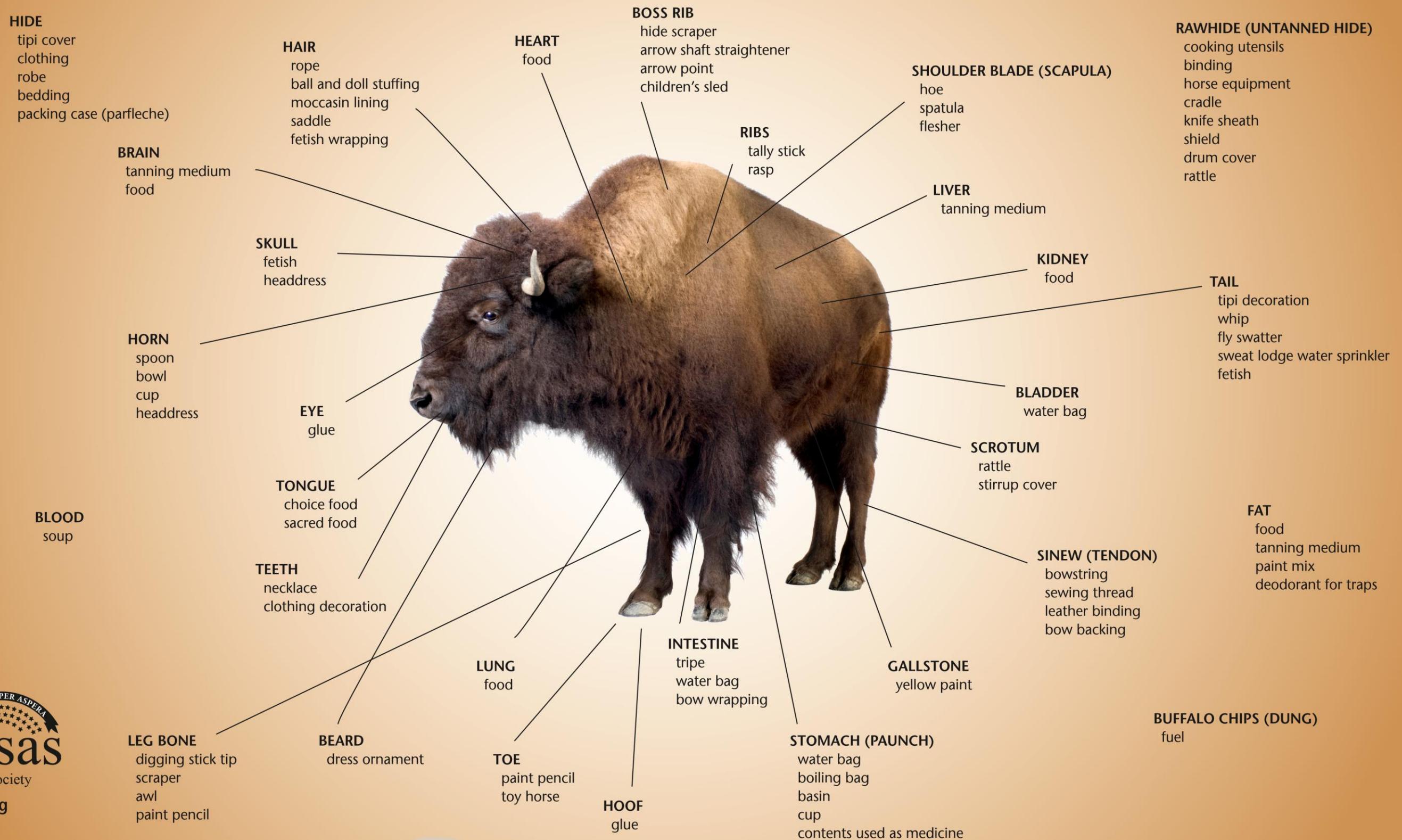


# Buffalo as a Resource



## Buffalo in Kansas

Prior to white settlers entering Kansas there were an estimated 20 million American Bison, commonly called buffalo, roaming the Great Plains. These animals were hunted by native peoples and used for food, clothing, housing, and many other essential items. Some of the plains tribes followed buffalo herds throughout the year.



When settlers first entered territorial Kansas they too saw the value of these large animals. Many settlers began hunting buffalo to sell the meat and hides for profit. Dodge City was a major shipping point for buffalo meat and hides. In the first three months of 1872, more than 43,000 buffalo hides and nearly 1.5 million pounds of meat were shipped to the East on the Santa Fe Railway. Bone pickers were paid \$4 to \$6 a ton for the dried buffalo bones. Shipped east, the bones were then ground and used in the manufacture of fertilizer, combs, dice, buttons, and bone china dishes. Some homesteaders used this business to supplement their farm income.

Many railroad companies considered the buffalo to be a nuisance, as they could wander onto tracks and cause problems. They hired men to hunt the buffalo so as to exterminate them.

Yet another use for the buffalo was specialized hunting trips for those easterners who considered themselves adventurous. They would pay guides for buffalo hunting excursions. In 1872 George Armstrong Custer took the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia on a sport hunting trip through Nebraska, Colorado, and Kansas.

The coming of settlers in Kansas had a large impact on the buffalo. Hunters were known to kill hundreds of buffalo in a matter of days and thousands in a matter of months. Buffalo hunter Frank Mayer commented: "We never killed all the buff we could, but only as many as our skinners could handle. Every outfit had its quota, which was determined by the ambition and the number of skinners. My regular quota was twenty-five a day, but on days when my crew weren't tired, I sometimes would run this up to 50 or even 60. But there I stopped, no matter how plentiful the buff were. Killing more than we could use would waste buff, which wasn't important; it also would waste ammunition, which was."

Charles Jesse "Buffalo" Jones was a breeder and trainer who owned the largest herd in Kansas, close to 150 head. By the 1900s there were only an estimated 500 buffalo left in the United States. Recognizing the danger of losing the buffalo, the government began breeding and protection programs to raise the species numbers.

The word buffalo came from the French word "les boeufs" which means oxen. In prehistoric times a buffalo could grow to weigh as much as 5,000 pounds. Today's bison are much smaller, averaging around 1,400-3,000 pounds for males and 900-1,200 pounds for females. On average buffalo will eat 25 pounds of grass in a day.

Buffalo can be found on specialized farms or roaming free within parks such as Yellowstone National Park. The plains bison, or buffalo, roams Kansas today on private land and in state parks.

The American Bison was named the official state animal of Kansas in 1955.

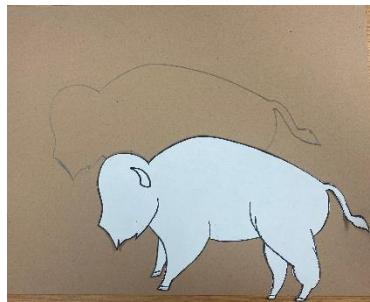
## American Buffalo

### Supplies:

- Buffalo Template
- Brown Yarn
- Cardstock
- Coloring Utensils
- Glue
- Scissors
- Popsicle Stick



1. Print out the buffalo template on cardstock. Color the buffalo brown. You can also trace the buffalo on brown paper.



2. Using the brown yarn, cut a handful of small yarn pieces.



3. Glue the yarn to the front half of the buffalo's body (not the head).



4. Cut out the buffalo and glue on a popsicle stick.

