Buffalo Facts
Buffalo Facts (adapted from Glenbow's Museokit)

Buffalo may be big but they are not clumsy! Buffalo can walk on rocky ledges and can even walk in places that a horse cannot.

Buffalo love to swim and can swim in very strong currents.

During the winter, Buffalo grow thicker skin with more fat and longer, thicker wool, which helps them survive the cold weather.

Buffalo like the deep snow as they can use their big bodies as a type of snowplow. Buffalo are able to find grass (their favourite food) by sweeping away the snow with their beards.

Buffalo love to eat grass. They use their thick, long tongues to gather the grass into their mouths and slice it off with their bottom teeth. They like it so much that they chew it for a very long time.

Female buffalo are called cows. Male buffalo are called bulls. Baby buffalo are called calves. The cows and calves spend a lot of time living separately from the bulls.

Buffalo stir up a lot of insects in the ground with their hooves, so birds like to follow them around looking for something good to eat. The buffalo like this because it means there are less insects to bother them!

The biggest, heaviest buffalo is usually more important in the herd so he will receive a good spot in the shade and will eat and drink before the others.

Buffalo communicate with one another using grunts, snorts and bellows. They also stamp their hooves and shake their heads.

Male buffalo like to bellow. They like to bellow at clouds during a thunderstorm, or when they are running or swimming. Sometimes they bellow when they are eating and the grass falls right out of their mouths.
Buffalo can hear and smell much better than they can see. Buffalo are more likely to smell or hear an enemy long before they can see them.

When a buffalo swishes his tail it means he is happy or excited. A tail that sticks straight out means that the buffalo is worried and a tail that is shaped like an 's' means that the buffalo is really mad!

Blackfoot children sometimes kept lost baby buffalo in their camps as pets as they are very playful. They like to run circles around the children and when they are tired they just flop down in the grass like a dog and fall asleep.

Railway companies built tracks across the plains and they sold tickets for people to go on hunting trips. The people inside of the trains would shoot at the buffalo using a gun.

The settlers and other non-Aboriginal People hunted a lot of buffalo only for their hides. They often left the meat and other important parts for waste.

The huge herds of buffalo that lived on the plains often used the same trails year after year that would lead them straight to water. Settlers would follow these trails and called them 'bison streets'.

The Blackfoot respected all of the animals of the plains and mountains, but their favourite was the buffalo. The Blackfoot people made up songs, dances and prayers about the buffalo because they were so important to their survival.

The Blackfoot people were broken-hearted when the herds of buffalo started disappearing from the plains. Their nomadic way of life came to an end once there were no more buffalo.

Buffalo and bison are the same animal? Bison is the correct name and buffalo is the nickname.
There are two kinds of buffalo: Woods Buffalo are darker, bigger and woollier than the Plains Buffalo.

The buffalo provided food, shelter and clothing for many Aboriginal People.

Buffalo are social animals as they live together in large herds.