

# CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Back Where They Belong'  
Issue September/ October 2017



## Grade Levels:

6-12

## Student Activities:

**Background:** Our world today faces many challenges. One topic that has received significant attention in the recent decades is human impact on the environment. Discussions about issues such as climate change, habitat destruction, and endangered species are often brought up on various platforms. Human activities have led many species to the verge of extinction or have extirpated them from their original habitats. There are many ongoing efforts to reintroduce such species to areas that were once their home. One such story is that of plains bison and their reintroduction to Banff National Park.

**Introduction:** Have students read the article titled “Back Where They Belong” in the September/October 2017 issue of Canadian Geographic. As they are reading, have them consider the following questions:

1. What are some of the important ecological roles played by bison?
2. What is the importance of plains bison to First Nations people?
3. Discuss the meaning of the following statement: “The relationship between groups such as the Blackfoot and bison in Banff was literally forged in fire.”
4. What are some of the tasks Parks Canada workers have to do to support the bison?
5. Explain some of the concerns of groups who are opposed to the Parks Canada reintroduction project.
6. What is your opinion on the reintroduction project? Do you think reintroducing the bison to the Banff area is a good idea? Why or why not?

Afterwards, have students watch the following Parks Canada video:

[Canada's Bison: Restoring a Legacy](#)

Next, let students choose one of the following three activities to complete.

## Activity 1: DEBATE

**Task:** Students will create a team of two or four to debate either for (affirmative) or against (negative) the reintroduction of plains bison to Banff National Park. Each team will have the following positions:

1. **First Constructive Speech** – (the lead) states position in an eloquent and succinct manner, introduces key points and arguments  
4-5 minutes