The Buffalo Massacre and Native Americans (Plains Era, 1800s)

Topics Covered:
The mass destruction of the buffalo (bison), impacts on Native American societies, U.S. expansion, and cultural and economic consequences for Plains tribes.

Part I: Multiple Choice (Choose the best answer)

1. What does the term "Buffalo Massacre" most commonly refer to?
   A. A battle between Native tribes
   B. The mass killing of bison in the 1800s
   C. A flood that killed wildlife
   D. A government treaty signing

2. Why was the buffalo important to many Native American tribes?
   A. Only for sport
   B. For food, clothing, tools, and spiritual life
   C. For building houses only
   D. As a form of currency in Europe

3. What was a major cause of the buffalo population decline?
   A. Overhunting by commercial hunters
   B. Natural predators increasing
   C. Volcanic eruptions
   D. Disease from plants

4. Who benefited financially from killing buffalo in large numbers?
   A. Railroad companies and commercial hunters
   B. Native American farmers
   C. European kings
   D. Schoolteachers

5. What was one effect of railroads on buffalo populations?
   A. They helped protect buffalo
   B. They made buffalo migration easier
   C. They gave hunters easier access to buffalo herds
   D. They had no impact

6. What was a major consequence for Native Americans after buffalo herds declined?
   A. Increased trade opportunities
   B. Forced starvation and hardship
   C. Immediate citizenship rights
   D. Larger territories

7. Buffalo hides were often used for:
   A. Medicine
   B. Industrial and commercial goods
   C. Currency in Asia
   D. Building ships

8. The destruction of buffalo herds most directly impacted:
   A. Urban factory workers
   B. Plains Native American cultures
   C. European royalty
   D. Northern fishermen

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9. What was a common hunting method used during the buffalo slaughter?
   A. Spearfishing
   B. Shooting from trains
   C. Poisoning rivers
   D. Net fishing

10. By the late 1800s, the buffalo population in North America had:
   A. Increased greatly
   B. Stayed the same
   C. Nearly collapsed in the wild
   D. Moved to Europe

Part II: True or False (T or F)

11. ___ - Buffalo were central to the economy and culture of many Plains tribes.

12. ___ - The U.S. government always protected buffalo populations.

13. ___ - Commercial hunters killed buffalo mainly for sport and profit.

14. ___ - The loss of buffalo contributed to Native American relocation to reservations.

15. ___ - Railroads made it harder for hunters to reach buffalo herds.

16. ___ - Some Native communities faced starvation after buffalo decline.

17. ___ - Buffalo hunting had no long-term environmental impact.

18. ___ - Entire Native cultures were affected by the loss of the buffalo.

19. ___ - Buffalo provided materials for clothing, tools, and shelter.

20. ___ - The buffalo population recovered quickly by 1900 without intervention.

Part III: Matching

Match the term to the correct description.

21. ____ Commercial Hunting	A. Large groups of bison that roamed the Plains
22. ____ Railroads	B. The organized killing of buffalo for profit
23. ____ Forced Starvation	C. Loss of food supply leading to hunger among Native peoples
24. ____ Cultural Impact	D. Expansion system that made buffalo easier to access and hunt
25. ____ Buffalo Herds	E. Changes & damage to Native traditions, survival, & way of life

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