



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## THE BISON

One of the most hunted animals of all time is the bison. The bison, also known as the buffalo, used to number between 30 and 60 million. Today there are only about 200,000 bison remaining. Only 16,000 of these are wild bison. The wild, free-roaming bison are located at Yellowstone National Park. People used to kill the bison for their thick, furry hides. Bison almost became extinct in 1890. Efforts were then made to try and save the bison.

The bison eat grasses and sedges. *Sedge* is a type of plant. Bison are known to keep moving as they graze on the grasses. This keeps any area from being overgrazed. The bison is a big animal. In fact, it is the heaviest land mammal in North America. The bison can get as big as 2,200 pounds. It stands anywhere from 5 to 6 ½ feet tall.

Bison are social animals that live in herds of about 20–50. The females lead the herd. The bulls (males) live alone or in small groups. The bison can reach speeds as fast as 35 miles per hour. Look out!

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. Ranchers and farmers would probably like to have bison graze on their land because . . .
  - a. bison are shy and feisty animals.
  - b. can reach speeds up to 35 mph.
  - c. bison keep moving as they eat, which prevents overgrazing.
  - d. bison live in herds or small groups.
2. According to the passage, what efforts do you think were made to prevent the extinction of the bison?
  - a. bison were let free and allowed to roam wild
  - b. laws were passed and rules made about the killing of bison
  - c. the president made it illegal to shoot a bison
  - d. bison live in herds or small groups
3. What is the main idea of the passage?
  - a. The bison can run very quickly.
  - b. The bison is an extinct animal.
  - c. The bison engage in social activity.
  - d. The bison is an interesting animal and has an interesting history.
4. The bison is the heaviest land mammal in . . .
  - a. North America.
  - b. the Orient.
  - c. South America.
  - d. Central America.