



**Lesson Plan Summary**  
**Magic Tree House #18: Buffalo Before Breakfast**  
**Lakota Winter Counts**

<b>DURING THIS BOOK STUDY, EACH STUDENT WILL:</b>	<b>COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn facts about the culture and language of the Lakota Plains Indians.</li><li>• Discover facts beyond the text about recorded history of the Lakota called winter counts</li><li>• Create a winter count to record important events in their lives.</li><li>• Involve parents in recalling memorable family events.</li><li>• Understand the importance of the buffalo to the survival of the Lakota</li><li>• Share winter counts and interpret events in the lives of classmates</li><li>• Use winter counts as an outline to write a personal narrative.</li></ul>	<p><b>Visual Arts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand historical and cultural content</li><li>• Express thoughts creatively in response to text</li></ul> <p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comprehension of fiction</li><li>• Make connections between the text of a story and a visual or oral presentation</li><li>• Foundational Skills</li></ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing Genres (Personal Narrative)</li><li>• Recall information from experiences</li><li>• Organize an event sequence</li></ul> <p><b>Speaking and Listening:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</li></ul> <p><b>Social Studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize some of the major components of a culture</li><li>• Determine similarities and differences in the ways different cultural groups address basic human needs</li></ul>

18-1S212

Created by: Paula Henson, 2007 Magic Tree House Teacher of the Year Knoxville, Tennessee



## Lesson Plan

### Magic Tree House #18: Buffalo Before Breakfast Lakota Winter Counts

In Buffalo Before Breakfast, students learn that the Lakota Plains Indians received many “gifts” from the buffalo: food from his body, tools from his bones, and tepees from his skin just to name a few. The Lakota also used the buffalo skin for written communication as paper was unavailable. As Jack and Annie discovered, Lakota Indians did not have a written language in the early 1800’s as we do today but used sign language and pictures to communicate.

Students also learned how important story-telling was to the Lakota as they heard about the legend of the White Buffalo Woman. One way for the Lakota to keep the stories alive and assure that they are handed down through the generations was by creating winter counts.

Winter counts provided a pictorial way of making a calendar that recorded one significant event to represent each year. For generations, Plains Indians drew pictures to document their experiences. They measured their years from first snowfall to first snowfall. Lakota winter counts were the recorded history of each band or tribe and served to prove what Jack and Annie discovered through the wisdom of Black Hawk’s grandmother: “All things are related”.

Each band of Lakota had their own winter count keeper who was responsible for keeping the winter count up to date. Each year he drew the most significant event with one simple symbol on an animal hide. The symbols had significant meaning for each band of Lakota. This winter count served as a timeline of sorts for each band. Typically, the first symbol of the winter count began in the middle of an animal hide and continued in a circular pattern as a new picture was added each year. The original Lone Dog winter count as seen below is on exhibit with many others at the Smithsonian. Visit their website to learn more about this exhibit and the history of winter counts:

<http://wintercounts.si.edu/>



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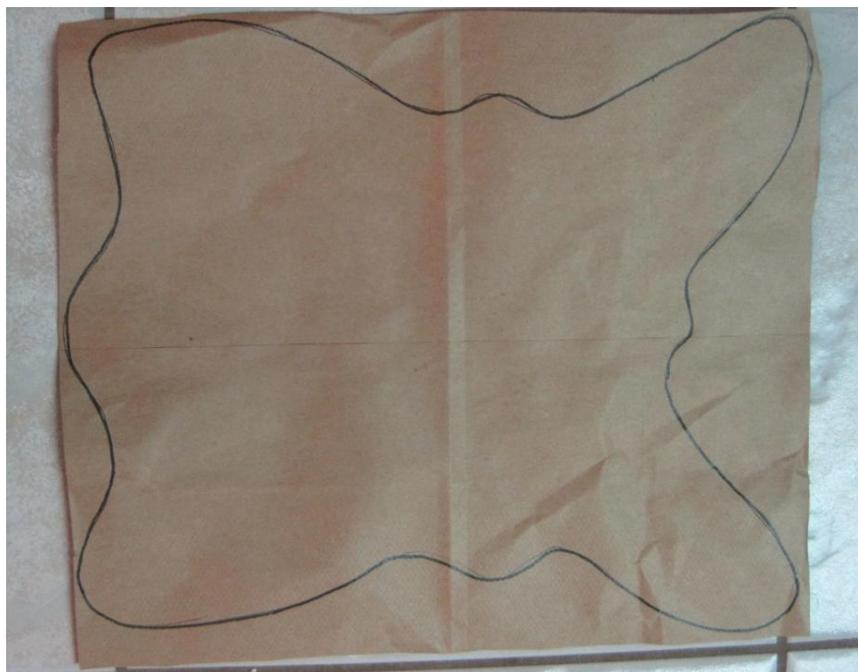
Next, allow your students to create their own winter counts that will serve as a timeline of their years (so far). After examining some Lakota pictographs, instruct your students to record their symbols on a “buffalo hide” in a circular pattern as they record one main event from each year of their life.

**Materials needed for each student:**

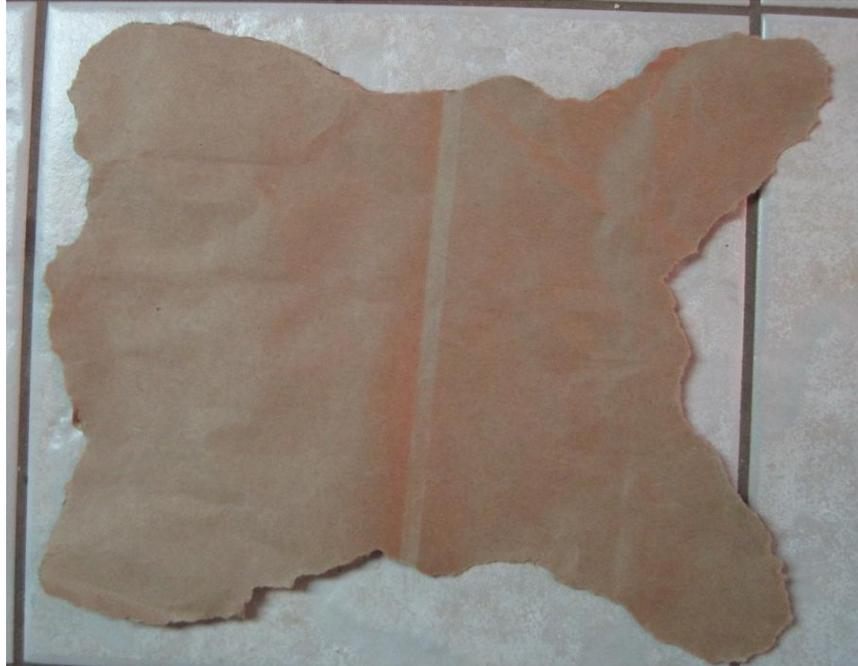
- 1 brown paper grocery bag
- Colored Pencils
- List of Lakota pictographs (Picture Dictionary provided)
- Completed Winter Count Planning Sheet (Provided)

The grocery bag will serve as the buffalo hide on which the student will record their winter count. Prepare the brown paper grocery bag in the following way:

- 1) Cut out the plain back part of the paper bag and allow the student to draw a shape that resembles a buffalo hide.



- 2) Next, tear the shape along the outline. Do not use scissors. Rough edges are desirable to create the look of a buffalo hide.



- 3) The students are now ready to record their own “story” of the main events in their lives on their winter count.
- 4) Allow your students to make a list of the most important event in each year of their lives on the Winter Count Planning Sheet (provided). Discuss possible suggestions as a class such as:
- The student’s birth for the first year
  - Arrival of siblings
  - Adopting a pet
  - Moving to a new location
  - First day of school
  - Special birthday party
  - Vacations

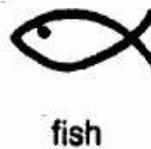
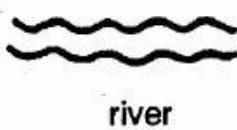
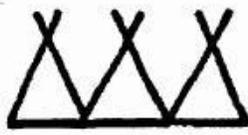
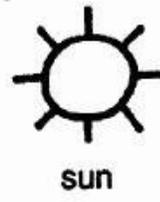
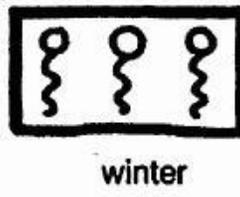
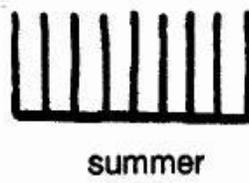
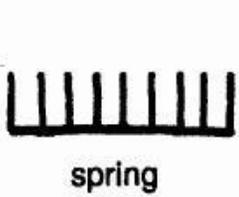
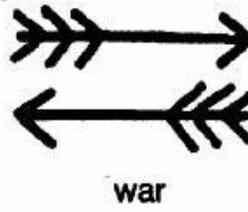
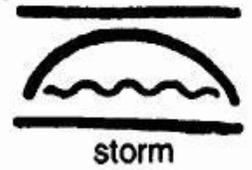
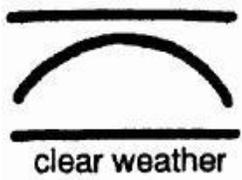


- 8) Crumple the “buffalo hide” into a ball and dampen it with water. Flatten the “hide” on a flat surface to dry. The crumpling process should give it a worn look. Allow the “hide” to dry overnight.



- 9) Using their winter counts as an outline, instruct your students to write a personal narrative as an interpretation of their illustrations.
- 10) Finally, allow your class to share their winter counts and interpret the special events in the lives of classmates before listening to personal narratives. Display these Lakota-style timelines alongside the personal narratives on a hall bulletin board for other classes to view.

# Picture Dictionary



# Winter Count Planning Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the table below to help you plan your winter count.

	Most Memorable Event	Pictograph
Year 1		
Year 2		
Year 3		
Year 4		
Year 5		
Year 6		
Year 7		
Year 8		
Year 9		
Year 10		