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## The Temperate Grasslands (Prairies in North America)

### Lesson Plan

#### Contents

- › What is the Temperate Zone?
- › Location and extent of the Prairies of North America
- › Physical features and climatic conditions
- › Vegetation and wildlife
- › Economic activities
- › Life of the people

#### Objectives

- › Learning about the Temperate Zone in its various forms across the world
- › What are Prairies : their location and extent in North America
- › Learning about the special features of the Prairies and their climate
- › Learning about the flora and fauna of the Prairies
- › How the climate and features affect the economic activities of the area
- › The lifestyle of people living on the Prairies

#### Teacher's Aids

Use the globe, maps and atlases.

Use the internet to show students the various Temperate Zones and their significance in the farming and agricultural activities.

#### Tips for Teacher

- › Make comparisons with the Tropical, Arctic and Desert regions.
- › Compare the Savannah grasslands: what makes the Temperate Zone different.
- › Talk about the benefits of large farms as compared to small holdings: using heavy machinery, mechanised farming methods, etc.
- › Explain why Prairies are the wheat basket of the world. Compare with other Temperate Zone areas.

## /// Gear Up and Background

- ▶ This is a picture of the prairie dogs.
- ▶ The animals in the area include the bison that were killed in large numbers when the immigrants into North America began to move westwards.
- ▶ What makes the temperate climate so useful for agricultural production?

## /// Location and Extent

- ▶ Read the lesson aloud and explain about Temperate Zone: the meaning of the word 'Temperate' as it applies to the climate.
- ▶ Locate the Temperate Zones on a map of the world and on the globe: 23 ½ degrees to 66 ½ degrees in both hemispheres, See how the sun's rays slant as they touch these areas – use the blackboard to explain. See distance from Equator and Poles.
- ▶ The other Temperate Zone grasslands and their names: Downs [Australia], Steppes [Europe], Velds [Africa], Pampas [South America] – compare with Savannah grasslands.
- ▶ Treeless – large flat tract of land covered with grass – 'Prairie': word origin French, meaning grassland or meadow.
- ▶ Prairies stretch from Rockies in the west to Great Lakes in the east, from Canada, through USA to Mexico. Point out on the map.

## /// Physical Features and Climatic Conditions

- ▶ Explain how their location and its physical features have affected the climate and the life of the people and their activities.
- ▶ The influence of the sea does not reach here.
- ▶ Make them interested by telling them that Mark Twain's great books 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer' and 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' relate to this area. The first two revolve around the Mississippi River.

## /// Vegetation and wildlife

- ▶ The flat grasslands, treeless, fertile, along with the climate, are ideal for farming.
- ▶ What grows on the prairies and the animals that live there: Habitat of various animals.
- ▶ Killing of bison: for meat, stretching of the electricity lines and railways across North America, clearing the area for farming.

## /// Economic Activities

- ▶ Activities based on the nature of the prairie: farming, animal husbandry, dairying, etc.
- ▶ Ranches: how they function. Make it interesting with cowboy stories. Real history also includes the enslavement of Africans brought for working on the cotton fields.
- ▶ Food storage and processing, meat processing, etc., as industries.
- ▶ Rich in coal and petroleum: oil refining, mining, etc., as industries.

## /// Life of the People

- ▶ Lifestyle of the ranchers, the cities, the coastal areas.
- ▶ The wealth of the area comes from its fertility.
- ▶ Living standards are high.
- ▶ Can make a passing reference to this being the heartland of the Civil Rights Movement – which will be referred to again when teaching about Martin Luther King.
- ▶ This area was also affected by some of the cyclones, such as Katrina which brought Detroit to a standstill. Correlate with the story 'The Wizard of Oz' where Dorothy and her dog, Toto, are carried off from Kansas in a tornado.