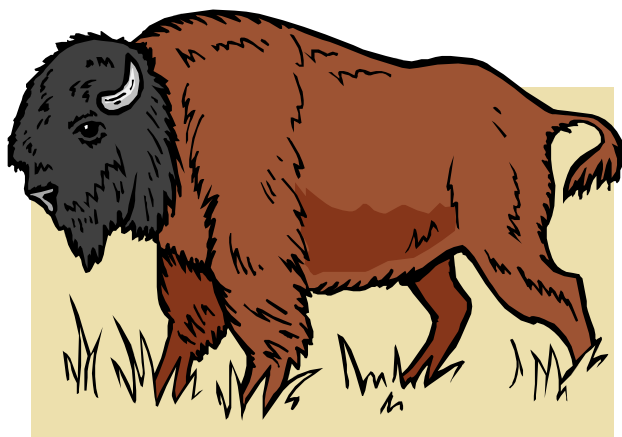


“Bison” versus “Buffalo”

The American bison was called “bufello” by early American settlers due to some similarities between it and known buffalo species. The words “bison” and “buffalo” are often used interchangeably, but did you know the bison and the buffalo are completely different animals? The American bison (*Bison bison*) and the two main species of buffalo live on different continents. The African or cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) and the wild Asian water buffalo (*Babalis arnee*) are only distant relatives of the American bison.

There are numerous differences between these animals. The most obvious is the large hump on the back of the bison. Buffalo do not have a hump. Bison have a massive head, but buffalo have a head that is smaller and more “cowlike.” Buffalo live in generally warmer climates than bison. Bison are able to survive and thrive in harsh conditions, like the bitter cold winters of the prairie. The fur of the American bison is much thicker than the fur of a buffalo.

Bison horns are shorter and more pointed than buffalo horns. Buffalo are typically more docile animals, allowing them to be more easily domesticated. Bison are known as aggressive and unpredictable animals. Buffalo are used for both meat and milk production in Asia and Africa. American bison are raised by some farmers/ranchers for their meat.



Is this animal a buffalo or a bison?