The Great Race Games

Hey Teachers!

Thanks for making the Wyoming State Museum a part of your classroom! This page will describe how to use this activity with your students!

Important Note:
During this activity, your students will be learning about how Native American people of the Great Plains lived from the mid 1600s through the mid 1800s. Although this activity focuses on one historic time period, it is vital that your students know that Native People still live in our communities as neighbors, classmates, friends, and leaders. Native Americans are not a culture that existed and then ceased to exist. More information on how to have this conversation can be found on the same Wyoming State Museum webpage that you downloaded this file from.

Introduction:
This activity some games you can play after watching or reading *The Great Race*.

Supplemental Activities:
On our website, you'll find a video from the Akta Lakota Cultural Center. It shows a house parent from St. Joseph's Indian School reading *The Great Race* by Paul Goble. There is also a copy of the book in the education trunks.

Preparation:
If you plan on playing "Tail Tag," you'll need a "tail" for each student. This can be a strip of fabric (about 1-inch wide by 2-feet long) or a 2-foot-long piece of rope.

Activity:
Classroom Race: One way to bring *The Great Race* to life is by having a classroom race! The museum recommends letting each student pick an animal they want to represent for the race. The list below are the animals mentioned in the story, along with some of the animals pictured in the story. For students in with accessibility needs, you can partner the student with a grown up to see how fast they can go together. After the kids run the race as humans, you can have them try to run it as the animal they chose.

Animals Mentioned in the Story: bison, magpie, jackrabbit, prairie dog, toad, hawk, mole, gopher, mouse, wolf, otter, coyote, rattlesnake, muskrat, beaver, bear, & crow.

Animals Pictured in the Story: pronghorn, white-tailed deer, red fox, crane, bale eagle, blue jay, meadowlark, elk, moose, bat, skunk, turkey, porcupine, raccoon, & turtle.

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Activity (Continued):

Tail Tag: For this activity, have every kid choose an animal with a tail that is mentioned or pictured in the book. Give each kid a "tail" – short strips of fabric or short pieces of rope. Have them tuck it into the back of their pants, so it hangs out behind them. Feel free to use tape for any students wearing dresses, overalls, or other outfits without a waistband.

The goal of this game is for each kid to run around and try to pull the "tails" off of the other kids, without getting their "tail" taken. There is no "it" for this game. If a kid loses their tail, they should get it back from the kid who pulled it, then go to the edge of the playing field; they're out for this round. You can play this game over and over again!

Bison Tag: This is basically "Blob Tag." The game starts with one bison, who is "it." They're trying to build up their herd. They run around, trying to tag the other students. When the bison tags someone, they hold hands with them – building the herd larger and larger. Anyone in the herd can tag the other students. The game keeps going until there is only one kid left; they are the bison for the next round.

Magical Trees: This game is set up like "Sharks and Minnows" with one kid on one end of the play area and all the other kids on the other end. When the kid who's "it" says "go," the other students try to run past them. Where the game differs from "Sharks and Minnows" is that any kid who's tagged becomes a magical tree. Their feet root in place (they can't move) but they can use their arms to try to touch other kids as they run past. Anyone who gets tagged, becomes a tree too. This ends up with patches of trees growing in the play area. The last kid left is "it" for the next round.

If you want to relate this game to the story, you can talk about the ecology of the prairie, where the story takes place. There are not many trees in prairies. The few trees that do grow, often grow in "riparian areas" – near rivers, ponds, and other water sources. In these places, you'll find patches of trees all growing together – right in the middle of a grassland.