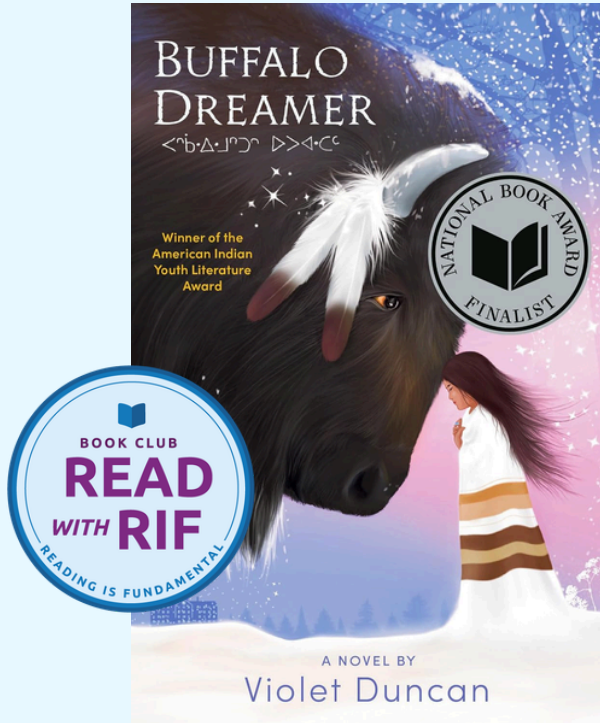




Violet Duncan

Buffalo Dreamer

Why read this book?

Summer looks forward to spending time with her family on their reservation in Alberta, Canada, but this summer brings new questions about her family's past. After she begins having vivid dreams about a girl escaping a residential school, Summer learns that unmarked children's graves have been discovered at the school her grandfather attended. As her family shares stories that have long gone unspoken, Summer begins to understand the painful history of residential schools and the strength and resilience of her ancestors. *Buffalo Dreamer* is a powerful story about family, Indigenous identity, remembering the past, and carrying culture forward with hope.

Great for readers who...

- Enjoy historical fiction connected to real events and family history
- Like stories about family, identity, and belonging
- Want to learn more about Indigenous history, culture, and traditions
- Appreciate stories about relationships between generations
- Enjoy thoughtful stories about resilience, community, and hope



Looking for your next great read?

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Buffalo Dreamer

Author: Violet Duncan

Themes: Identity, Family, Culture, Resilience

Book Brief: Summer's dreams and her family's stories lead her to uncover a painful part of Indigenous history and better understand the strength, culture, and resilience carried across generations.



BEFORE READING

To activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Ask, “What are some ways families pass down stories, traditions, or memories from one generation to the next?”
- Use RIF’s [KWL Chart](#) to activate background knowledge and spark curiosity.
- Purpose for Reading: “As you read, think about how learning about her family’s past changes Summer’s understanding of herself, her family, and her community.”

DURING READING

To engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- How does Summer feel about spending time with her family in Alberta? What does she value about being there?
- What does Summer experience in her dreams? Why do the dreams become important to her?
- What does Summer learn about residential schools and her grandfather’s experiences?
- Why might some experiences be difficult for Summer’s grandfather and other community members to talk about?
- How do Summer’s family and community preserve and celebrate their culture?
- How does Summer’s understanding of her family’s history change throughout the story?

AFTER READING

To summarize, question, and reflect.

- Ask: “How does learning about her family’s past help Summer better understand who she is? What message do you think the author wants readers to take away from her story?”
- Have students create a Past, Present, Future reflection based on the novel. Identify something Summer learns about her family’s past, something she recognizes about her community in the present, and a hope she expresses for the future.
- Use the discussion questions on the next page to continue the conversation after reading. Talk together about how the novel’s themes of family, identity, culture, resilience, and remembering the past connect to our lives and communities.

Beyond the Book: Conversation Starters



For the classroom

1. How does Summer's understanding of her grandfather and family's history change throughout the story? What experiences help her learn more?
2. Summer learns about painful experiences from the past while also experiencing joy, connection, and tradition with her family. Why is it important for the story to show both?
3. What does the novel teach us about the importance of remembering and sharing stories from the past? How can stories help preserve family and cultural history?

For at home

1. Talk about a story, tradition, or memory that has been passed down in your family. Why is it important to you?
2. Summer learns more about her family by listening to the experiences of older generations. Ask a family member about something they remember from when they were younger. What did you learn?
3. Discuss something your family or community does to celebrate or carry forward its traditions. How would you like to continue that tradition in the future?

Past, Present, Future

Our families and communities are shaped by the stories and experiences of generations before us. Think about a story, tradition, lesson, or experience that is important to your family or community. Write about where it comes from, what it means to you today, and how you hope it will be remembered or carried forward in the future.



Connections to Culture

Culture can be shared and carried forward in many ways. Think about the examples you noticed in the book. Add an example from the book to each box.



STORIES

What stories or memories are shared?

TRADITIONS

What traditions or practices bring people together?

FAMILY

How do family members teach and learn from one another?

**LAND &
COMMUNITY**

How does connection to place or community matter?

**LANGUAGE &
KNOWLEDGE**

What knowledge is shared or passed down?

What do you notice?

Circle one or more words that describe what these connections help build:

Identity • Belonging • Strength • Understanding • Community • Resilience