1925 – 1949
Beef Goes Modern

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**LESSON PLAN**

**Operation Haylift**

- Resources
- Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

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LESSON PLAN
Operation Haylift

This lesson plan was funded in part by the Cooper Foundation, Abel Foundation, and the Nebraska Humanities Council.

**Length** Two-three class periods

**Lesson Objectives**

1. Students will understand the impact of the blizzards of 1948-49 and the rescue efforts of Operation Haylift.
2. Students will analyze and interpret information to create a radio broadcast, representative of historical events.

**Resources & Materials**

- Computer with Internet access
- LCD projector
- Operation Haylift Radio Broadcast Handouts, located in the Resources section at the end of this document (there are two and they can be run back to back)
- Operation Haylift Notes, located in the Resources section at the end of this document
- Microphone image that can be laminated, located in the Resources section at the end of this document
- Blow up microphones for props, if you have them
- Anything students might use for sound effects
- Radio Broadcast Rubric, located in the Resources section at the end of this document
- Nebraska History Special Issue: "I’m Never Going to be Snowbound Again" The Winter of 1948-1949. Fall/Winter 2002 Vol. 83, No. 3 & 4 [https://history.nebraska.gov/blog/will-winter-never-end](https://history.nebraska.gov/blog/will-winter-never-end)

**Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards**

**Nebraska State SOCIAL STUDIES Standards**

SS 8.4.1; S 8.4.2; SS 8.4.3; SS 8.4.4

**Nebraska State English Language Arts Standards**

LA 8.1.6 Comprehension; LA 8.4.1 Information Fluency
Introduction

In the winter of 1948-49, a blizzard hit Nebraska with devastating results. The storms started in November and continued through February. The snow stopped trains, buried houses, and threatened nearly a million head of cattle. Operation Haylift was a massive effort to save livestock for Nebraska’s farmers and ranchers.

Vocabulary

blizzard
cargo plane
livestock
rural
spotter

Weasel (a light, self-propelled tracked vehicle for traveling over snow, ice, sand, or in water)
LESSON PLAN
Operation Haylift

The Process

Warm Up:

1. Ask students what was the worst snowstorm they can remember. Students will have a variety of answers.

2. In their notebooks or on a piece of paper, ask students to write down what challenges students and their families face during modern snowstorms, and then have them share their answers. Answers may include:
   - losing electricity for several days,
   - being stuck at home because they couldn’t get out,
   - having to shovel out their driveway, etc.

3. If you teach in an urban setting, ask students how the challenges would have been different if their families had lived on a farm. Answers may include:
   - You would have to feed the animals.
   - You would be more isolated from neighbors.
   - You would be farther away from grocery stores, etc.
Activity
1. Explain to students that in the winter of 1948-49, a blizzard hit Nebraska with devastating results. The storms started in November and continued through February. The snow stopped trains, buried houses, and threatened nearly a million head of cattle. Operation Haylift was a massive effort to save livestock for Nebraska’s farmers and ranchers. This activity will focus on the attempts to save the cattle that belonged to numerous farmers and ranchers.

2. Hand out the Operation Haylift Notes Worksheet, located in the Resources section at the end of this document. Students will use it for taking notes.

3. In order to gather information, students will examine the Operation Haylift page in the Beef Goes Modern section of the 1925-1949 timeline of Nebraska Studies. http://nebraskastudies.org/1925-1949/beef-goes-modern/operation-haylift/ Students will also watch the two videos on that page, Blizzard: A Really Bad Snowstorm and then, Sibbit’s Cat Story to see how one rancher got through it.

Note: Teachers can show this on an LCD projector or students can view the information on individual computers.

4. Review Operation Haylift Notes, located in the Resources section at the end of this document, with students, and make sure that all students have correct information recorded. Students can share their answers and ask questions about the haylift and the blizzard.

5. Explain that the final product for this assignment will be to conduct a radio broadcast that is historically accurate and representative of the time period. Hand out the Operation Haylift Radio Broadcast Handout to students (there are two pages and they can be copied back to back). Go over the assignment with students so they understand what is required in the assignment.

6. Put students into groups of 3-4. Give them time to brainstorm, write a script, and rehearse their radio broadcast.

7. Students will present their radio broadcasts and the teacher will grade them using the rubric located in the Resources section at the end of this document.

Evaluation
1. Teachers can grade the Operation Haylift Notes to check for comprehension.

2. A rubric is provided in the Resources section at the end of this document to grade the radio broadcast.

Extensions
• Have students brainstorm about how technology would impact a modern day rescue of cattle stranded in a blizzard.

• Have students look up agricultural statistics in Nebraska today to see the number of cattle raised and how a blizzard would impact the cattle industry.
# 1925 – 1949

**Beef Goes Modern**

## resources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation Haylift Radio Broadcast Information Handout (2 pages)</th>
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<th>Operation Haylift Notes</th>
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<tr>
<th>Operation Haylift Rubric</th>
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Nebraska Department of Education Academic Standards  
https://www.education.ne.gov/contentareastandards/

Nebraska Department of Education Social Studies and History Standards  

National Archives http://www.archives.gov/index.html  
Library of Congress Learning Page Lesson Plans  
https://www.loc.gov/search/?in=&q=lesson+plans&new=true&st=
In the winter of 1948-49 a blizzard hit Nebraska with devastating results. The storms started in November and continued through February. The snow stopped trains, buried houses, and threatened nearly a million head of cattle. Operation Haylift was a massive effort to save livestock for Nebraska’s farmers and ranchers.

You are going to work in a small group to create a radio broadcast that tells the story of Operation Haylift. You will “interview” people associated with rescue operation and tell their story through a re-creation of a radio broadcast.

Here are the requirements:

• All group members must have a speaking role.

• You must have a written script. In other words, you cannot make it up as you go.

• You must include at least five facts that you learned from the website and video.

• You must include at least two “real” quotes that are provided. You can include more.

• Your broadcast should be 2-3 minutes long.

You will be graded on the following:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Excellent 4 points</th>
<th>Good 3 points</th>
<th>Average 2 points</th>
<th>Poor 1 point</th>
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<tr>
<td>All group members had a speaking role</td>
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Working in a small group, you are going to tell the story of Operation Haylift. You will use your notes from the text and video from the Operation Haylift page of the Beef Goes Modern section of the 1925-1949 timeline of Nebraska Studies.


Here are some additional ideas to help you get started.

**Characters**

**Choose from these characters.** If you want to add an additional character, check with your teacher first.

- Nebraska rancher whose cattle were just fed
- Nebraska rancher on the ground waiting for help
- Farmer with 100 head of cattle who needs help
- Rancher with 700 head of cattle who needs help
- Person kicking the hay out of the plane
- Airplane operator
- Governor Val Peterson
- Amateur radio operator
- Spotter who knew the land and guided the pilot to the ranches

**Quotes**

**Choose two of these quotes.** You will also make up quotes of your own to use in your radio broadcast.

- “There ain’t nothing that’ll put the chills up your back like a bad, bad snowstorm.”
- “My cow is hungry as hell. Please toss her a bale of hay when you go over.”
- “We saw so much trouble from the air, including seven cows lying dead near one ranchhouse.”
- “No doubt the operation did a great deal of good in its way. It was a temporary measure, and kept cattle alive until they could be fed in the natural way.”
Take notes as you examine the text and video from the Operation Haylift page of the Beef Goes Modern section of the 1925-1949 timeline of Nebraska Studies.

The notes will provide background information for your radio broadcast.

**Photographs**
What do you observe from photographs of the blizzard? Describe the scenes and the difficulties people and animals encountered during the blizzard.

**The Storm**
Give facts about the storm. How much snow fell? How was life affected by the blizzards? How was transportation stopped?

**The Need on the Ground**
Describe how the storm affected Nebraska communities. What was damaged? Could people leave their homes? How did people need help?

**Operation Haylift**
Describe what happened during the haylift. Record how many cattle needed food, how much hay was dropped, what types of planes were used, etc.
Microphone as Prop
## Operation Haylift
### Radio Broadcast Rubric

Group Member Names:

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Total Points __________________________
Social Studies Standards

SS 8.4.1 Analyze patterns of continuity and change over time in the United States history.

SS 8.4.2 Use multiple perspectives to evaluate the historical, social, and cultural context of past and current events.

SS 8.4.3 Examine historical events from the perspectives of marginalized and underrepresented groups.

SS 8.4.4 Evaluate and interpret sources for perspective and historical context.
Language Arts Standards

LA 8.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by applying prior knowledge, using text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading increasingly complex grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 8.4.1 Information Fluency: Students will evaluate, create, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats (textual, visual, and digital).