

Grade 5  
Research Simulation Task  
Fall

Title: On the Move

**Standards Addressed in Performance Task:**

Standard RI.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Standard RI.5.2: Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text .

Standard W.5.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

W.5.2.b: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

W.5.2.c: Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases and clauses.

**Task**

Based on the information in the text, “A Hunger for Grass,” explain why the wildebeest undertake a risky and dangerous migration each year.

Explain why the wildebeest migrate using the text “A Hunger for Grass.”

- Use facts, details, and examples from the text in your answer .
- Include inferences in your answer.

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## A Hunger for Grass



Wildebeests, just like cows, are grazers or grass-eaters. The daily life of a wildebeest is a simple one. Walk forward. Keep your head down. Bite, chew, swallow.

Wildebeests spend the dry season (August through November) in the north of the Serengeti, where mostly medium tall grasses grow. This area gets enough rain to grow grass all year long. But around December of each year, when the rainy season comes, the wildebeests abandon the taller grasses and head south to the treeless shortgrass plains.

The long journey is not without danger. When they're on the move they have less time to eat, and many go hungry. Though they travel in enormous herds, some times joined by zebras and gazelles, they must pass through territories of hungry lions and hyenas. They cross rivers where crocodiles wait with open jaws. Tens of thousands die along the way from hunger, predators, or simply from the hard journey.

# A Hunger for Grass

When the wildebeest finally arrive in the south, the rains have come and sweet new grass covers the land. And not just any grass! The soil of the southern plains is full of volcanic ash. This makes it rich in minerals, so it grows especially nutritious grass. The wildebeests are hungry for one mineral in particular: Phosphorus. Phosphorus, like calcium, builds bones.

The female wildebeests give birth to their baby calves on these southern plains during the rainy season. Without the minerals in this grass, their bones would weaken and they wouldn't be able to produce enough milk for their young. But full of rich grass, they get the next generation of grazers off to a good start. The calves feast on the tender new grasses, building up strength for the long journey ahead.

The rain and the good grass last just a few months of the year in the southern part of the Serengeti. By April, the grass turns dry and brown again. The wildebeests begin their return journey to the north, in search of fresh grass pastures.

If they stayed in the north all year, the wildebeests would miss out on the grass of the south and wouldn't get the minerals they need to breed. If the wildebeests stayed in the south, they wouldn't have enough food in the dry months.

Wildebeests trace a great circle around the Serengeti, following the grass.