

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

3-5

Subject

Reading & Art

Lesson Title

Trickster Tale Comics: The Cunning Coyote

Activity Description: In many cultures, especially Native American tribes, trickster tales are typically about certain animals that have clever or mischievous behavior. This activity features the coyote, a popular trickster across many Native American tribes. After sharing several coyote tales, this activity provides an opportunity to create a comic book sketch of your own coyote trickster tale.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Blank sheets of paper such as copy paper
- Pencil and pen
- Ruler
- (optional) coloring pencils or markers
- WiFi access (recommended)
- CBC Kids web-page [Have you ever heard a trickster tale?](#)
- Digital or printed version of ["Coyote Places the Stars"](#) story
- YouTube or hard copy version of [Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the American Southwest](#) by Gerald McDermott

STEPS

The coyote is one of the most famous tricksters of all tricksters. Each tribe or region has its own version of coyote's tricky tales usually told to teach a lesson or explain how something in nature happens. In these stories, coyote can be sneaky but also very helpful at times. Follow the steps below for a journey with coyote and then use your imagination and talent to create a comic strip of your own coyote trickster tale:

Activity Steps:

1. Visit the CBC Kids webpage [Have you ever heard a trickster tale?](#)
 - a. What is a trickster tale? What other animals besides the coyote are considered tricksters?
2. Next, read the online or printed version of the story ["Coyote Places the Stars"](#)
3. (Optional) Then, watch this [short animated video version of the story Coyote and the Stars](#).
 - a. What are the similarities and differences between the two stories about coyote and the stars?
4. Finally, listen to the [YouTube read aloud of Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the American Southwest](#) by Gerald McDermott. You can read the paper copy of the book if it is available to you.
 - a. How does this coyote story explain why the coyote looks like it does?
 - b. What are the characteristics of the coyote in these stories? What makes him a trickster?
5. Now it is your turn to create your own coyote trickster comic strip. Check out the "Helpful Tips" section if you need more help with creating comic strips. Here are a few steps to guide you:
 - a. Think about how you want your coyote to look and sketch this on a piece of paper.
 - b. Create your other characters and think about what they will look and act like.
 - c. Plot out the events in your story in several sentences and make sure you know how it will end.
 - d. Using a ruler, create the boxes on your paper making sure you have enough room to draw.
 - e. Draw enough sketches or scenes to tell the story. Add color if needed.

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HELPFUL TIPS

Parents and caregivers: Because coyotes are popular tricksters, many tribes or regions will have their own coyote tales. Share any coyote tales you have heard with your own child or ask elders in the community to share as well. While doing this activity with your child, consider the following:

- Discuss the characteristics of a real coyote that causes people to create trickster tales. Coyotes are known for traveling alone, hunting farm animals in a sneaky way, playing, being very smart, howling at night, walking with a sneaky posture, and being very fast. Ask your child to share where they saw these characteristics in the stories they heard in the activity.
- If your child wants more help with writing comics, visit [Amelia Book Company: Children's Publishing](#)

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Families and educators: Because coyote is a central character in many traditional stories, children may ask additional questions about the animal or want to read other coyote stories. Here are a few suggestions for further interest:

- For more traditional stories, read the *First People* collection of [Native American Legends by Tribe](#).
- To learn more facts about coyotes, read this list on [Facts Just For Kids and Coyote Enthusiasts](#).
- For more fun with coyotes, share this YouTube cartoon collection from [Looney Tunes: Wile E Coyote & Roadrunner](#). This popular cartoon was based on the trickster character coyote from the American Southwest. Remind your children that these are just stories and that they should NOT do the things that the tricky coyote does.

Activity Resources:

- Have you ever heard a trickster tale? info webpage by *CBC Kids* <https://www.cbc.ca/kidscbc2/the-feed/have-you-ever-heard-a-trickster-tale>
- "Coyote and the Stars" YouTube video uploaded by Chris MacKinnon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98vhlC8Eg1k>
- Digital or printed version of "Coyote Places the Stars" recorded by Harriet Peck Taylor <http://cloud.rpsar.net/edocs/ela/4thGrade/TCRes/Unit5/LiteraryText/CoyotePlacesTheStars.pdf>
- *Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the American Southwest* by Gerald McDermott, YouTube read aloud by AHEV Library <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eDWCf2rXhc>

Additional Resources:

- "Top Tips on How to Write a Comic Book for Kids" from Children's Publishing by the *Amelia Book Company* <https://childrenspublishing.com/top-tips-on-how-to-write-a-comic-book-for-kids/>
- "Native American Legends by Tribe" a collection by *First People* <https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/Legends-C.html>
- "Facts Just For Kids and Coyote Enthusiasts" <https://www.factsjustforkids.com/animal-facts/coyote-facts-for-kids.html>
- Looney Tunes: Wile E Coyote & Roadrunner from *WB Kids* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_A4XIYQUuc