

**LEVEL 1 | BOOK 1 | READABILITY LEVEL 5.8**

# Coyote and the Stars

## Story Summary

This Coyote story from the Warm Springs Tribe shares the adventures of coyote as he attempts to be part of the stars twinkling in the sky. Coyote finds out that the twinkling lights (stars) are really beautiful girls and he wants to meet them and dance with them. However, the girls must dance all the time and coyote just cannot keep up with them. Since he cannot dance he falls from the sky.

## Author

Verbena Greene

## Illustrator

Carol Allison

## Grade Level

4–6

## Estimated Instructional Time

Four 60 minute lessons

## Materials/Resources Needed

Copies of Coyote and the Stars, internet access, listening station and tapes of stories, Anansi stories, other coyote stories, character analysis handouts, biopoem handout (2 options)

## Overview of the Lesson

Students will be engaged in learning activities related to the Chipmunk story that provide opportunities for students to practice the identified dimensions of reading: vocabulary, fluency, decoding, and comprehension.

## Student Objectives

- Students will recognize coyote and spider as two popular trickster type characters in folktales.
- Students will compare the personality traits of the Coyote and Anansi characters.
- Students will define biopoem.
- Students will write a biopoem that describes either Coyote or Anansi.

# Teacher Background

- **National Museum of the American Indian.** The National Museum of the American Indian is the sixteenth museum of the Smithsonian Institution. It is the first national museum dedicated to the preservation, study, and exhibition of the life, languages, literature, history, and arts of Native Americans. The museum works in collaboration with the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere to protect and foster their cultures by reaffirming traditions and beliefs, encouraging contemporary artistic expression, and empowering the Indian voice. <http://www.nmai.si.edu/>
- **Native Americans.** This site contains historical information about the various tribal groups in North America with extensive links to other sites. <http://www.nativeamericans.com/>
- **Native American Languages.** This site is dedicated to preserving and promoting American Indian languages, mainly through the use of internet technology. This site also contains a link of Native American information for kids and teachers. <http://www.native-languages.org/>

## Instructional Plan - Learning Activities

### Vocabulary

*Folktale, trickster, coyote, twinkling, brilliantly, beautiful, heavens, weave, giant, redwood, overcome, stared, buckskin, trimmed, porcupine, quills, forever, couldn't, begged, pleaded, teased, thirsty, answered, aching, hungry, dragging, mossy, soared, whistled, Klamath, region*

### SESSION #1

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- Have a chart with the important vocabulary on display while the story is read.
- Read *Coyote and the Stars* aloud to students, periodically examining illustrations, asking for connections, and predictions.
- Discuss the character of Coyote with students and complete the character analysis chart with students (See Appendix A). How would you describe Coyote? What is his personality like? Does he have weaknesses? Strengths? What do you think of his actions in the story?
- Have students use the URLs suggested to locate other Coyote stories to read (Also can download and copy for students if computers are limited in number. For struggling students also record the stories so they can read and listen to the audiotape)
- When students have read the stories they should complete the Character Analysis Chart for that story.
- Gather again in whole group and popcorn share information.

## SESSION #2

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- Read *Anansi Tries to Steal All the Wisdom in the World* aloud to students, periodically examining illustrations, asking for connections, and predictions.
- Discuss the character of Anansi with students and complete the character analysis chart with students (See Appendix A). How would you describe Anansi? What is his personality like? Does he have weaknesses? Strengths? What do you think of his actions in the story?
- Explain that Anansi is a popular character in many African folktales. Ask students if they see any similarities between Coyote and Anansi and discuss.
- Have students use the URLs suggested to locate other Anansi stories to read (Also can download and copy for students if computers are limited in number. For struggling students also record the stories so they can read and listen to the audiotape)
- When students have read the stories they should complete the Character Analysis Chart for that story.
- Gather again in whole group and popcorn share information.

## SESSION #3

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- Have students do a five minute quick write: How are Anansi and Coyote alike in personality (smart, sly, lazy, and funny, etc.)?
- Have students meet in 3 person groups to share their quick writes.
- Using a Compare/Contrast Character Analysis Handout (Appendix A), work with students on a comparison and contrast of Anansi and Coyote based on the stories that were read aloud to students.
- Have students complete a Compare/Contrast Character Analysis (Appendix A) in their journals for one Coyote and one Anansi that they read on their own.

## SESSION #4

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- Explain that a biopoem is a structured collection of vivid details about a character's life, personality traits and aspirations: a portrait in words.
- Provide the biopoem handout (Appendix B) listing the steps to complete the biopoem.
- Complete a biopoem for yourself with the students. This will serve as a model for students and also motivates them since you are willing to write with them.
- Review the process and then have students create a biopoem for themselves, a family member, or a pet.

- Do a read around the class so students can receive positive feedback from class mates (can be done in small groups as well as whole group).
- Have students review their character analyses sheets for Coyote and Anansi.
- Using this information students create a biopoem for either Anansi or Coyote.

## EXTENSIONS

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- Divide students into small groups and have each group create either an Anansi story or a Coyote story with illustrations.
- Have students research other trickster stories from other cultures.

## Student Assessment/Reflection

Character analysis chart, quick write, journal, and biopoem

## Teacher Resources

### ***A Coyote Reader* by William Bright (1983)**

Publisher's Description: "Wily, raunchy, and heroic. A trickster, lecher, and supreme survivor. Such is the magical Coyote, that mythic Native American figure whose various roles are recounted here in a wonderful selection of poetry and stories.

### ***Coyote Tales by Mourning Dove (Christine Quintasket) (1933) from the Great Spirit Names the Animal People: How Coyote Came by his Powers (Okanogan)***

"The Great Spirit called all his people together from all over the earth. There was to be a change. He would give names to the people, and the Animal World was to rule. The naming was to begin at the break of day, each one having the right to choose his or her name according to who came first to the Spirit Chief's lodge. The Spirit Chief would also give each one their duty to perform in the changed conditions."

This site provides links to many coyote stories from a variety of indigenous peoples. <http://www.indians.org/welker/coyote.htm>

The site contains a full lesson plan for biopoems. [http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Language\\_Arts/Writing/WCP0067.html](http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Language_Arts/Writing/WCP0067.html)