**UNIT** **文化觀點**

**11** **3/27-3/28 ★★**

**Why the Coyote Is So Important in Native North American Culture**

**北美原住民神靈──凱歐帝**

*by Sam Williams*

Mar. 27

The native people of North America often used characters **based on** animals to help **make sense of** the world. There are many of these animal characters, but one of the most famous is Coyote. Coyote, a symbol of cunning, features in many Native American stories. He is often shown as a clever character that **plays tricks on** others. Coyote also uses his cunning to try to get what he wants, though this often **goes wrong** in **humorous1** ways. **Interestingly**, humor is a major part of Native American **folk2** stories. These stories are used to teach important lessons about **morals3** and the world **as a whole**.

Coyote has a very adaptable personality, **enabling4** him to live in various environments. He **represents5** the idea of **survival6**, which is something that is highly respected by Native Americans. Coyote is also sometimes seen as a bridge between different worlds. His howling at the moon is thought to connect the earthly world with the spiritual world. This means that the spiritual world often features in Coyote’s stories.

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It would be strange to talk about the importance of Coyote’s stories without telling one. So, **settle down** and read one of his most popular stories.

**Long ago**, people faced terrible winters. There was no fire to keep people warm on those cold nights. **As a result**, many died. Coyote heard the people’s cries over **the dead** and took **pity1** on them. He knew three Fire Beings on a distant mountain that guarded fire. **However**, they refused to share its **comforting2 glow3**.

Coyote asked his friends—Squirrel, Chipmunk, Frog, and Wood—for help. As the Fire Beings changed guard, Coyote seized a burning ember. The Fire Beings chased him. Coyote passed the ember to Squirrel, then Chipmunk, Frog, and finally Wood. **Then**, the Fire Beings returned to the mountain, unable to take the ember from Wood. Coyote taught the people to get fire from Wood by rubbing two sticks together. Winter’s **chill4** quickly **vanished5**.

This story is a great example of Coyote’s cunning, **as well as** his kindness and **bravery6**. Is your personality like Coyote’s?