**The Magic of Coyote**

**SUMMARY** This is a story about the cost of being afraid and the benefit of overcoming your fear. With the help of a Navajo storyteller and a dog that is part coyote, a boy learns to conquer his fear of dogs. This story also introduces the concept of fable, a story with talking animals that teaches a lesson.

**LESSON VOCABULARY**
- artifacts
- breakthrough
- cunning
- descendant
- retreated
- scampered
- yelping

**INTRODUCE THE BOOK**

**INTRODUCE THE TITLE AND AUTHOR** Discuss with students the title and the author of *The Magic of Coyote*. Based on the title, ask students what they imagine this book might be about and whether the title indicates that the book is fiction or nonfiction. Note the word *magic* in the title, and discuss what it might indicate.

**BUILD BACKGROUND** Within this story, a Navajo storyteller shares a traditional Navajo tale about a clever coyote who teaches humans to use fire. Discuss with students other fictional tales they’ve encountered in which animals are smart and can talk or behave like people.

**PREVIEW/USE TEXT FEATURES** As students preview the book, draw their attention to the clouds pictured above the main character’s head on pages 4 and 17. Ask students what these clouds mean and why they think the artist drew them. Discuss how *thought balloons* add to the story.

**READ THE BOOK**

**SET PURPOSE** Have students set a purpose for reading *The Magic of Coyote*. Students’ interest in conquering their fears of dogs (or something else) should guide this purpose. Suggest that students think about the cost of being afraid and the benefits of facing their fears.

**STRATEGY SUPPORT: PREDICT** As students read about Henry grappling with his fear of dogs, predicting what may happen next in the story can give students a chance to reinforce what they already know. Making predictions also deepens students’ involvement in the story and gives them a stake in the story’s outcome.

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

**PAGE 3** What details show you why Henry is afraid of dogs? *(They yelp and have sharp teeth and unpleasant smells.)*

**PAGE 10** What clues show that Mr. Gordon’s story is fiction? *(Coyote understands human conversation; coyote feels sympathy; fire beings don’t really exist.)*

**PAGE 21** Ranger is part coyote and part dog. Why does this help soothe Henry’s fears? *(He already likes coyotes from the story. He is only afraid of the “dog” part of Ranger.)*

**PAGES 21–22** What do you think the author’s purpose was in having Henry pet Ranger? *(The author wanted to show that when Henry faced his fear and touched the dog, he started to get over his fear.)*
REVISIT THE BOOK

READER RESPONSE
1. Possible response: to give information about Navajo culture and to show how a story can help you get over your fears
2. Possible response: Henry will probably be much less scared around dogs. The more he is around dogs, the less frightened he will be.
3. brunch=breakfast, lunch; motel=motor, hotel; moped=motor, pedal; paratroops=parachute, troops; skylab=sky, laboratory; smog=smoke, fog: telethon=telephone, marathon
4. Responses will vary.

EXTEND UNDERSTANDING Tell students that stories that involve talking animals are common worldwide, from Aesop’s fables to Navajo coyote tales to C.S. Lewis’s Chronicles of Narnia. Encourage students to discuss what it is about animals that makes them useful as characters in stories that teach a lesson, explain an idea, or show us something about ourselves.

RESPONSE OPTIONS
WORD WORK Play a true or false word game with students. Using the vocabulary words, put the words in sentences and ask students if the words have been used correctly. For example: After the student read twenty books, she retreated into her room to watch TV. Do the same with all of the vocabulary words. Encourage students to write their own “true or false” sentences using the vocabulary words in this lesson.

SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION Invite students to learn more about the lives of Navajo children. Encourage them to use research books or the Internet. Ask them to write them short reports on what they find and to present them to the class.

Skill Work

TEACH/REVIEW VOCABULARY
Write the vocabulary words on the board. Have volunteers look up their definitions and share them with the class. Invite discussion as to how each word contributes to a story. For example, if a character is described as cunning, what might you expect from the character?

ELL Word studies can often make vocabulary more memorable. Demonstrate how breakthrough divides into break and through. Discuss the meanings of the separate words and then what they mean together. Show that descendant is related to descend, which means “to come down.” Use a diagram with grandparents on top, then parents, then children, to show how descend means going down. Review that -ed at the end of several words makes them past tense.

TARGET SKILL AND STRATEGY
AUTHOR’S PURPOSE Remind students that the author’s purpose is the reason why the author wrote the story. An author might want to entertain, inform, express, or persuade. Have them look for clues and details that reveal why the author might have written the story.

PREDICT Remind students that to predict means to guess what will happen next in a story based on what has happened before. As students read, suggest that they predict what will make Henry less afraid of dogs. Ask students to write their predictions. After they’ve read the story, have them review their predictions to see which ones were right.

ADDITIONAL SKILL INSTRUCTION
SEQUENCE Remind students that the sequence of events is the order in which events happen in a story. Have students do a story map of the book, placing major events under the headings “beginning of the story,” “middle of the story,” and “end of the story.” As students read, ask them to write down any clue words or phrases that might help them with sequence, such as after or the next day.
Author’s Purpose

- The author’s purpose is the reason or reasons the author has for writing.
- An author may have one or more reasons for writing. Common reasons are to inform, persuade, entertain, or express.

Directions  Answer the questions.

1. What do you think is the author’s purpose for writing this story?

2. What do you think is the author’s purpose for including the story about Coyote?

3. How does the story about Coyote stealing fire help Henry?

4. What do you think the author wants you to learn about Navajo culture?

5. Why do you think the author had Henry meet a coydog?
Henry was afraid of the (1) ____________ dogs. Every time he saw them, he (2) ____________ to the back of the room.

One day, Henry and his class visited a Native American museum. First they studied ancient (3) ____________, such as pieces of pottery. Then it was time for a story.

The story was told by Mr. Gordon, who was a (4) ____________ of a Navajo storyteller. Mr. Gordon told tales about the coyote, a (5) ____________ creature who often played tricks on the Navajo people. Henry discovered that his interest in coyotes made him feel less afraid about dogs. When Mr. Gordon’s coydog, Ranger, (6) ____________ over to Henry, Henry actually petted Ranger. Henry was excited, because he knew this was a real (7) ____________.

Directions  Write the definition of each word based on its context above. Use a dictionary if necessary.

8. retreated ____________________________________________________________________________

9. breakthrough _________________________________________________________________________

10. yelping ____________________________________________________________________________