

UNIT 4

Read the following passage, taking note of the **boldface** words and their contexts. These words are among those you will be studying in Unit 4. As you complete the exercises in this Unit, it may help to refer to the way the words are used below.

Coyotes in Legend and Myth

<Informational Essay>

In some of the most **spirited** Native American myths and legends, the main character is a trickster figure named Coyote. In these tales, Coyote is nearly always **controversial**, inspiring both admiration and disapproval. Sometimes he is wily and ingenious, while at other times he plays the **buffoon**. At first glance, such paradoxes may seem **bewildering**.

But Coyote's great achievement as a mythical figure is to break the **orthodox** mold. In the end, he cannot be easily classified. It is usually **fruitless** to predict how Coyote will behave in any given

situation. He is a **virtual** bundle of contradictions. He is simultaneously a clown, a rebel, and a **wayward** troublemaker.

In myths and legends, the character Coyote displays some clear resemblances to the behavior of the animal known as *Canis latrans*. Like coyotes in real life, the story character is nearly always hungry. One of his primary concerns is to **procure** food to fill his belly. To this end, he **scurries** around, often in disguise and more than willing to cheat others.

One amusing tale about Coyote and cheating involves the challenge of a trader. This man dares Coyote to beat him in a deal. Far from being **disheartened**, Coyote accepts the challenge. He tells the man, though, that he needs to return home to collect his "cheating medicine." Coyote will



need to borrow the trader's horse. Also, to make the horse comfortable, he will need to borrow the trader's clothes. Eagerly, the trader gives in to these requests. As Coyote rides off into the distance, the trader, who had hoped to **inflict** a defeat on Coyote, is left **mortified** and **wincing** with shame.

In another tale, an opponent turns the tables on Coyote, bearing out the truth of the old adage "set a thief to catch a thief." As often in trickster tales, Coyote has forged an **alliance** with his friend Iktome, or Spider. The two friends admire a beautiful rock named Iya. Coyote places his own blanket on the rock as a gift. When the weather turns colder, however, Coyote reclaims the blanket, despite Iktome's warnings. After Coyote refuses to return the blanket, Iya turns **hostile**. Following through the woods, he pursues the two friends. Finally, Iktome dashes down a hole to escape, abandoning Coyote. Iya then rolls over Coyote, flattening him out like a rug. The trickster has been beaten. At least, so it appears.

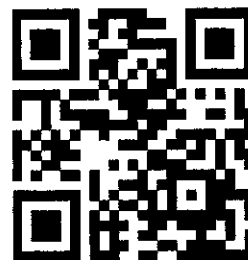
Coyote is never permanently defeated, however. In Native American legends and myths, he always has the power to return to life. In fact, many of these stories present Coyote as the creator of the world. In these tales, he fashions the universe

from the **void** and makes people out of mud. Coyote is also featured as a culture hero who steals fire and gives it to human beings. This dimension of Coyote parallels the most famous deed of the Greek mythological hero Prometheus, who was punished by the gods for his theft of fire.

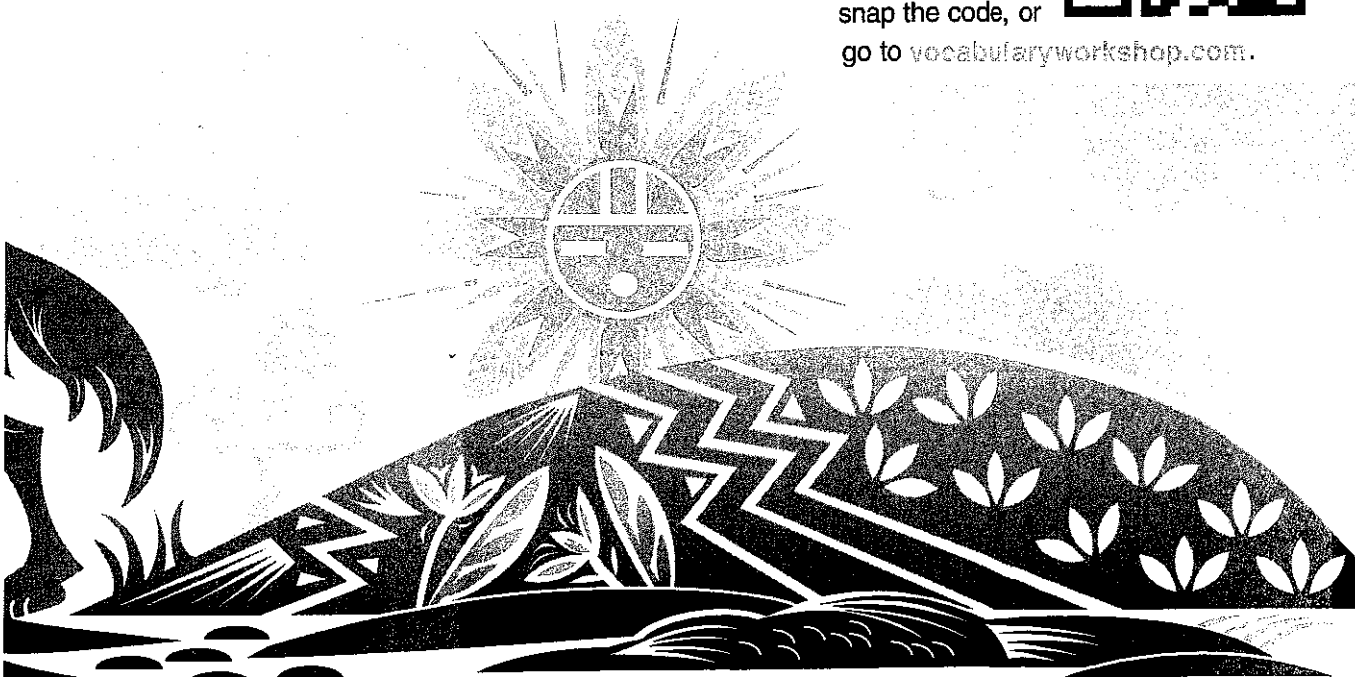
In fact, Coyote as a trickster resembles many of the best-known figures of world mythology, such as Loki in northern Europe, the fox Reynard in medieval France, the Japanese kitsune or seven-tailed fox, and the trickster/creator figure of Raven, who is also a hero in many Native American tales.



Audio



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Definitions

Note the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the appropriate form of the word in the blank spaces in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms.

- 1. alliance**
(ə lī' əns)

(*n.*) a joining together for some common purpose
The two nations formed an _____ to defend each other in case of attack.
SYNONYMS: pact, league, coalition
ANTONYMS: rift, split
- 2. bewilder**
(bi wil' dər)

(*v.*) to puzzle completely, confuse
The captain continues to _____ his troops by giving contradictory orders.
SYNONYMS: perplex, confound; ANTONYMS: set straight, enlighten
- 3. buffoon**
(bə fūn')

(*n.*) a clown; a coarse, stupid person
Some students think that they need to play the _____ in order to entertain their classmates and charm their teachers.
SYNONYMS: jester, dunce
- 4. controversial**
(kən trə vər' shəl)

(*adj.*) arousing argument, dispute, or disagreement
The school board waited until all members were present before issuing the _____ proposal to ban after-school programs.
SYNONYMS: arguable, at issue
- 5. dishearten**
(dis härt' ən)

(*v.*) to discourage
Do not let your low score on the math test _____ you.
SYNONYMS: demoralize, dispirit; ANTONYMS: encourage, hearten
- 6. fruitless**
(früt' ləs)

(*adj.*) not producing the desired results, unsuccessful
When their efforts to fight the infection with penicillin proved _____, the doctors tried a new antibiotic.
SYNONYMS: useless, vain, unproductive
ANTONYMS: productive, effective
- 7. hostile**
(häs' təl)

(*adj.*) unfriendly; unfavorable; warlike, aggressive
Relations between the two nations have been _____ for decades.
ANTONYMS: friendly, cordial

8. inflammable
(in flam' ə bəl)

(*adj.*) easily set on fire; easily angered or aroused

Always be cautious when using _____
cleaning solvents.

SYNONYMS: flammable, excitable

ANTONYMS: fire-resistant, calm

9. inflict
(in flikt')

(*v.*) to give or cause something unpleasant, impose

Despite all the jokes, doctors do not like to
_____ pain on their patients.

SYNONYMS: deal out, visit upon

ANTONYMS: suffer, undergo, sustain

10. malignant
(mə lig' nənt)

(*adj.*) deadly, extremely harmful, evil; spiteful, malicious

Much to the patient's relief, the x-ray revealed no
_____ growth.

SYNONYMS: wicked, malevolent

ANTONYMS: wholesome, beneficial

11. mortify
(môrt' ə fi)

(*v.*) to hurt someone's feelings deeply; to cause
embarrassment or humiliation; to subdue or discipline by
self-denial or suffering

The teacher was _____ by the students'
childish behavior on the field trip.

SYNONYMS: embarrass, abash

12. orthodox
(ôr' thə dăks)

(*adj.*) in agreement with established or generally accepted
beliefs or ways of doing things

Our principal, who believes in proven teaching methods,
takes an _____ approach to education.

SYNONYMS: traditional, standard, customary

ANTONYMS: unusual, unconventional, heretical

13. procure
(prə kyür')

(*v.*) to obtain through special effort; to bring about

The hospital held a raffle to _____ the
necessary funds for the new children's wing.

SYNONYMS: gain, achieve

14. scurry
(skər' ē)

(*v.*) to run quickly, scamper, hurry

The reappearance of the teacher caused the students in
the class to _____ back to their seats.

SYNONYMS: rush, dash, scramble

ANTONYMS: trudge, plod, creep, crawl

15. sodden
(säd' ən)

(*adj.*) soaked with liquid or moisture; expressionless, dull; spiritless, listless

All at once, and with much loud honking, the flock of geese rose from the _____ marshlands.

SYNONYMS: waterlogged, saturated

ANTONYMS: parched, arid

16. spirited
(spir' ə tid)

(*adj.*) full of life and vigor; courageous

The royal soldiers put up a _____ defense against the invading army.

SYNONYMS: lively, animated, gallant

ANTONYMS: lifeless, dull

17. virtual
(vær' chü əl)

(*adj.*) having a certain force or effect in fact but not in name; so close as to be equivalent to the real thing

To those who worked in the office, the bossy new manager was a _____ dictator.

SYNONYM: functioning as

18. void
(void)

(*adj.*) completely empty; having no legal force or effect; (*n.*) empty or unfilled space; (*v.*) to cancel or nullify

I thought that poem was completely _____ of sense.

Grandmother's death left a great _____ in my grandfather's life.

Do you know how to _____ a check?

SYNONYMS: (*adj.*) invalid, vacant, bare

ANTONYMS: (*adj.*) in effect, teeming with; (*v.*) confirm

19. wayward
(wā' wərd)

(*adj.*) disobedient, willful; unpredictable, capricious

Tracking the _____ path of a comet is no easy matter.

SYNONYMS: insubordinate; rebellious; perverse

ANTONYMS: docile, well-behaved, predictable

20. wince
(wins)

(*v.*) to draw back suddenly, as though in pain or fear; (*n.*) the act of drawing back in this way

The animal's bite made the child _____ in pain.

The patient's _____ told the doctor to press more gently.

SYNONYMS: (*v.*) flinch, shudder

Choosing the Right Word

Select the **boldface** word that better completes each sentence. You might refer to the passage on pages 50–51 to see how most of these words are used in context.

1. When his army seemed (**virtually, soddenly**) defeated by the British, George Washington crossed the Delaware and won a victory.
2. A cold spell in December (**inflicted, bewildered**) heavy losses on the Florida citrus crop.
3. I still (**scurry, wince**) when I think of the two errors that cost us the championship.
4. I could see from the (**inflicted, bewildered**) expression on the child's face that he was lost.
5. Because I no longer go to high school, my student bus pass has been (**voided, disheartened**).
6. The scrappy coach's (**fruitless, spirited**) pep talk lifted the team out of its "losing-season blues."
7. "It's hard not to be a little (**procured, disheartened**) when your favorite team is in the cellar two weeks before the playoffs," I replied.
8. In high school, students should (**procure, void**) training in basic skills that they will need in order to get good jobs as adults.
9. We are going to form a broad (**void, alliance**) among all the groups that are working to improve life in our community.
10. (**Fruitless, Controversial**) political figures are likely to have as many outspoken critics as enthusiastic supporters.
11. Being scolded for my shortcomings in front of the entire basketball squad was a (**mortifying, wayward**) experience for me.
12. Instead of being (**wayward, hostile**), why don't you try to show some friendliness to those newcomers?
13. All our efforts to control pollution will be (**fruitless, inflammable**) unless we work out a careful, detailed plan in advance.
14. On the hottest night of the summer, the sheets on my bed became so (**sodden, malignant**) with perspiration that I had to change them.
15. Our supervisor acts calm most of the time, but we have learned that he has a very (**orthodox, inflammable**) temper.



On the night of December 25, 1776, Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware River into New Jersey to surprise the British forces.

16. From the deck of the starship, they gazed in awe at the empty black (**alliance, void**) of outer space.
17. (**Malignant, Virtual**) gossip has unjustly damaged their reputation.
18. I can understand that you want to be witty and amusing, but try not to make people think you're a mere (**alliance, buffoon**).
19. For this job, we hope to hire people who have a (**spirited, disheartened**) and upbeat attitude, not ones who are drab and dull.
20. Though her views about the role of women in society are far from (**hostile, orthodox**), even conservatives and traditionalists listen to them.
21. He plays computer games so much that he almost seems to live in a (**virtual, void**) world instead of in reality with the rest of us.
22. (**Controversial, Malignant**) growths need to be removed as soon as possible by an experienced surgeon.
23. Walking through the meadow at night, we could hear mice and other small animals (**scurrying, wincing**) in the grass.
24. "Whenever you find (**wayward, controversial**) children," the speaker said, "you also find ineffective parents."
25. That joke was so unfunny, even the comedian herself gave a (**buffoon, wince**).

Synonyms

*Choose the word from this Unit that is the same or most nearly the same in meaning as the **boldface** word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.*

1. to **recoil** at the idea of getting up so early _____
2. brought up the **debatable** issue on the Senate floor _____
3. made a **futile** effort to defeat the enemy _____
4. persuaded lawmakers to **repeal** the law _____
5. **baffle** friends with his odd reaction _____
6. walked on grass **drenched** with rain _____
7. would **humiliate** her parents with her crude behavior _____
8. used a highly **combustible** cleaning fluid _____
9. became **dismayed** by the lack of money _____
10. suffering from a **lethal** disease _____

Antonyms

Choose the word from this Unit that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the **boldface** word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. as **dry** as a desert during the summer months _____
2. gave a **lackluster** performance for the audience _____
3. got a **peaceful** response from the crowd _____
4. had a **benign** influence on other people _____
5. kept important papers in a **fireproof** safe _____

Completing the Sentence

From the words in this Unit, choose the one that best completes each of the following sentences. Write the correct word form in the space provided.

1. If it is allowed to spread unchecked, the poison of racial prejudice will have a(n) _____ effect on our community.
2. Would it be a bad pun if I were to say that our attempts to set up an apple orchard have proved to be _____?
3. When the Supreme Court finds a law unconstitutional, that law is said to be null and _____.
4. In 1949, the United States formed a(n) _____ with eleven other nations, calling it the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
5. We _____ such heavy casualties on the enemy that they were forced to break off the engagement and retreat.
6. After four days of steady rainfall, the _____ ground gurgled as we trudged wearily over it.
7. Before we set out on the camping trip, I was given sole responsibility for _____ all the equipment and supplies.
8. Because the gas did not burn when we brought a flame to it, the experiment showed that carbon dioxide is not _____.
9. Some parts of the president's proposal were agreeable to everyone; others proved highly _____.
10. The frozen wastes of the Arctic may seem _____ to human life, but in fact thousands of people are able to survive there.

11. I was thoroughly _____ when I suddenly stumbled and spilled punch all over the host's tuxedo.
12. Though the gallant defenders of the fort were hopelessly outnumbered, they put up a truly _____ fight.
13. Their behavior is so _____ and unpredictable that I never know what they are going to do next.
14. Even though you like to do things in your own way, I suggest that you first learn the _____ method of batting.
15. Refusing to be _____ by her failure to find a summer job, Lucy made up her mind to try again.
16. Despite the fact that she has no official title, she has become the _____ director of the company.
17. Even though I'm an adult, I still _____ in discomfort at the thought of a trip to the dentist.
18. The often dreary courts of medieval kings were enlivened by the pranks and antics of jesters and _____.
19. When the naughty children heard their mother's footsteps approaching, they quickly _____ back to bed.
20. The directions he gave us for driving to the beach were so complicated that I was completely _____ by them.

Writing Words in Action

1. Look back at "Coyotes in Legend and Myth" (pages 50–51). Imagine that you are Coyote. You have spent your long life trying to trick others. You want to persuade your fellow mythical creatures that you are really doing good for the world. Write an argument using at least two details from the passage and three Unit words to support your claim.
2. Every culture on earth has its own myths. Although mythic events could not really happen, myths often contain powerful messages that relate to real life. Write a brief essay on the power of myth. Choose a myth that you know well, perhaps one from your own cultural background. Summarize the myth and explain what lesson about life the myth reveals. Support your ideas with your observations, studies, reading (refer to pages 50–51), or personal experience. Write at least three paragraphs, and use three or more words from this Unit.

The following excerpts are from Jack London's novel *The Sea-Wolf*. Some of the words you have studied in this Unit appear in **boldface** type. Complete each statement below the excerpt by circling the letter of the correct answer.

1. I had come to see a **malignant** devil in him which impelled him to hate all the world. I sometimes thought that he hated even himself, so grotesquely had life dealt with him, and so monstrously.

A **malignant** spirit is one that is

- a. lonely
- b. friendly
- c. evil
- d. mischievous

2. I ground my teeth in my anger and determination till the man I was attending **winned** under my hand.

If a person **winned**, then he or she was most likely feeling

- a. pleasure
- b. pain
- c. calm
- d. interest

3. "We must stand together, without appearing to do so, in secret **alliance**. I shall not be able to side with you openly, and, no matter what indignities may be put upon me, you are to remain likewise silent."

An **alliance** between two people

- a. unites them
- b. displeases them
- c. fools them
- d. harms them



The 1941 film version of *The Sea-Wolf* featured Edward G. Robinson, John Garfield, and Ida Lupino, well-known stars of the day.

4. That she was frightened and **bewildered**, and that she was bravely striving to hide it, was quite plain to me.

Someone who is **bewildered** is

- a. focused
- b. confused
- c. absent
- d. timid

5. The sight of the great masts lying in the water almost **disheartened** me. Where were we to begin? If there had been one mast standing, something high up to which to fasten blocks and tackles! But there was nothing.

Someone who is **disheartened** is NOT

- a. demoralized
- b. ordinary
- c. clever
- d. enthusiastic

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