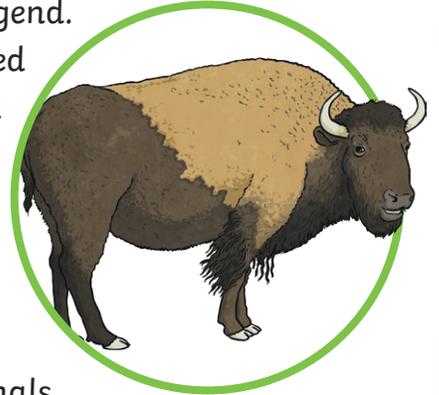


# How Bison Came to Roam the Earth Myth

The following tale is a Blackfoot, Commanche, and Apache legend. It tells the story of Coyote the Trickster, and how he orchestrated a plan to release bison on the Earth. The terms “bison” and “buffalo” are often used to describe the same animal.



Coyote was a trickster. He was very clever and able to transform himself into other animals. People were always on the lookout for Coyote so he could not trick them.

At this time, people were starving. There were no large animals around to hunt. Coyote was hungry too. He searched the land for something to eat. He came across a high ridge and saw a fenced corral full of bison.

“That’s not fair,” Coyote thought. “Those people should have to share the bison.”

He went to a village to ask a man for help.

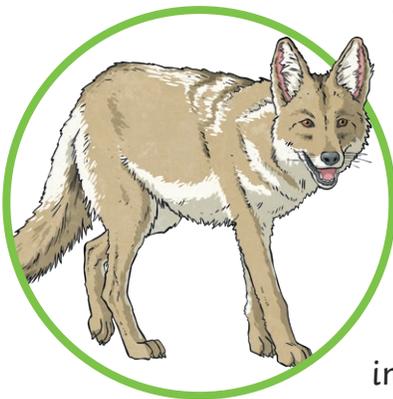
“I have found bison for us to hunt and eat, but they are locked in a corral. Let’s work together to get the bison out of the corral!” said Coyote.

The man agreed and went with Coyote to the ridge where the bison could be found.

“The fence is too high and strong to climb in and release the buffalo,” observed the man.

“I have an idea!” shouted Coyote the Trickster. “I will transform myself into an animal the people will let inside. That way, I can release the buffalo from inside the corral.”

Coyote transformed himself into a bird with a broken wing.



When the little boy of the family found the bird, he brought it inside. He wanted to keep it and care for it until it was healed, but his father said, “No. Birds are useless. Put it back outside where you found it.” The boy did as he was told.

Coyote was disappointed his trick did not work. The man encouraged Coyote to try again, “Your idea is very clever, and it will work. Try again, but this time, transform yourself into something the man will let the boy keep.”

## How the Bison Were Released on the Earth

Coyote climbed over the ridge and transformed himself into a small puppy. When the little boy found the puppy, he begged his father to let him keep it. The father examined the puppy carefully.

“You can’t trust animals,” the father said. “We have to make sure this is really a puppy.”

When the father decided the animal was, in fact, a puppy, he told the boy he could keep it outside. The boy released the puppy into the corral with the bison. When the family went to sleep, Coyote nipped at the heels of the bison and caused a stampede. They charged through the fence and escaped the corral. The father tried to herd them back into the fences, but he could not. The boy wanted to check on his puppy to see if it was safe after the bison escaped, but he could not find it.

“I knew it wasn’t really a puppy!” the father exclaimed. “We’ve been tricked by Coyote.”

That is the tale of how bison were released to roam the Earth.

# Questions

1. Why were people worried about Coyote?

- He was sick.
- He was a trouble-maker.
- He was in danger.
- He was dying.

2. Where did Coyote find bison?

- in a corral
- in the canyon
- on the mountains
- by the river

3. What happened when Coyote turned into a bird?

- A boy came to help him.
- An eagle came to eat him.
- He got lost.
- He couldn't turn back into a coyote.

4. How did Coyote release the bison?

- He caused a stampede.
- He opened the gate.
- He gave them power to fly.
- He showed them how to get out of the corral.

5. What is the purpose of this myth?

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6. Why did Coyote want to release the bison?

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# Answers

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5. What is the purpose of this myth?

**Answers may vary. A possible answer is: The purpose is to give an idea as to how bison came to roam the land.**

6. Why did Coyote want to release the bison?

**Answers may vary. A possible answer is: Coyote wanted to release the bison because everyone was starving with not enough big animals to hunt.**