

Test POWER

Read the stories “Coyote and Eagle Steal the Sun and Moon” and “Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky.” As you read, stop and answer each question using text evidence.



Coyote and Eagle Steal the Sun and Moon: A Zuni Folktale

The Zuni are an American Indian people of New Mexico and Arizona. Animals and nature are an important part of Zuni stories.

Long ago, the land was always dark, and the weather was always warm. One day, Eagle and Coyote were hungry, so they went out to hunt for food. Hunting was difficult because there was no daylight.

After a while, Eagle and Coyote came to the home of the powerful Kachina people. The Kachinas owned a shining box that held the sun and the moon. If Eagle and Coyote had the shining light of the sun and the moon, they would not have to hunt in the dark. They decided they must have that box.

The two hunters waited until the Kachinas were asleep. Then they seized the shining box and crept silently away. Eagle was the first to carry the box, but after a while Coyote offered to take a turn. Eagle handed his friend the box, and they continued on their way.

- 1 What does the word *seized* mean? Explain how you can figure out the meaning from the way the word is used in the story.

Coyote was a curious creature, however. He was so eager to see what was in the box that he couldn't resist tipping open the lid just a little bit.

Out flew the sun! Out flew the moon! Up into the sky they went, as Eagle and Coyote watched in amazement.

Ever since that time, the sun and the moon have remained in the sky, giving light and warmth to the land below. Because they flew so far into the sky, Earth has less heat than it did before. That is why we now have winter during part of the year.

- 2 What does this folktale explain about nature?
Use details from the story to support your response.

Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky: A Nigerian Folktale

This story comes from Nigeria, a country in western Africa. Like many folktales, it tells how something in nature came to be.

A long, long time ago, Sun and Moon lived on Earth. They often visited their good friend Water, but Water never came to visit them. Water said it was because their house was too small. "You will need a very large house," Water told them, "as my people are numerous and take up much room."

So Sun and Moon built an enormous house and invited Water to visit. When Water arrived, one of his people called out, "Are you sure it is safe for Water to enter?" Sun and Moon replied that their friend was most welcome and they were sure it would be safe.

Then the water began flowing in, with all the fish and turtles and other sorts of water creatures. Soon the water in the house was up to a person's knees. Water asked, "Are you sure you want us all to come in?" Sun and Moon politely said yes.

More and more water flowed into the house, bringing more and more water creatures. Now the water was as high as a person's head. Water asked if they were sure it was safe for even more of his people to come in. Sun and Moon politely said yes.

- 3 Do you agree or disagree with Sun and Moon that it is safe for more of Water's people to come in? Use details from the story to explain your response.

Before long, the water was so deep that Sun and Moon had to sit on the roof of their house. Water asked again if it was all right for more to come in. Sun and Moon politely said yes.

Before long, the water had reached the roof and was still continuing to rise. Sun and Moon had no place to go now except into the sky. So up they went, and there they have remained ever since.

- 4 How are the two stories you have read alike, and how are they different?