

**Read the article. Then answer the question below.**

## **Coyotes**

The name coyote means "barking dog." However, coyotes are not pets; they are wild animals. In fact, Native Americans call the coyote "little wolf." Coyotes live in forests, mountains, grasslands, and deserts. Coyotes are able to live in so many different places because they eat almost anything. Their food includes mice, squirrels, insects, reptiles, rabbits, fruit, and seeds. Sometimes coyotes will even eat trash left on the ground or in wastebaskets.

A coyote's size is similar to that of a medium-sized dog. Coyotes are about one and a half to two feet tall and between forty-one and fifty-three inches long. They weigh between twenty and fifty pounds. Most coyotes are gray, but some are rust or brown-colored.

Coyotes have long legs that help them run very quickly. A long bushy tail helps them keep their balance as they run. They have excellent senses of smell, hearing, and sight. All of these things make them great hunters and help them avoid enemies.

Coyotes are clever and very resourceful. They have learned to live through many changes. They lost much of their food supply when people moved onto their lands. Since at times coyotes have eaten cows, sheep, and chickens in order to survive, some people have come to think of them as pests. People have hunted and trapped these animals for hundreds of years. However, coyotes have survived and have even grown in number.

Nowadays, some people are beginning to think differently about coyotes. They see them as being helpful. Coyotes eat many animals that are harmful to people and to crops. They help to keep rodent populations under control. Scientists who study the environment now understand what an important part coyotes have in Earth's ecology.

Write a response explaining how coyotes are both good and bad. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.