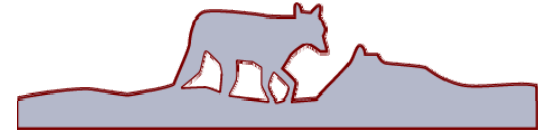


Name \_\_\_\_\_



# What is a Coyote?

Illegal immigration is a complicated process, and many refugees that apply for refugee status are denied. Some don't want to take the time to apply, as people fleeing their own country sometimes fear for their lives. Others may find the process overwhelming or daunting; or may be frustrated by the long wait for approval, which can sometimes take years. For this variety of reasons, people trying to enter the U.S. from Mexico sometimes seek the help of a coyote.

A coyote is a person who smuggles people across the border into the United States from Mexico. They are usually very experienced, and use different techniques like sneaking across the desert or hiding immigrants in trucks. Illegal border crossings are extremely dangerous. Refugees sometimes die of dehydration or exhaustion. They have also been known to die while trapped in trucks or shipping containers, or to drown trying to swim the Rio Grande. Sometimes they are shot by border patrol officers or by vigilantes.

Because of the danger involved, coyotes demand high fees to chaperone their charges through the desert. And these fees must be paid before the trip – just in case the refugee doesn't make it across alive. Refugees can also face danger from the coyotes themselves, who may manipulate and threaten their already vulnerable clients in order to secure a higher fee. Most coyotes, though, get continued work based on their reputation both in Mexico and in the United States, so being honest and reputable is the best way to get more business. One hired, the coyote is typically expected to guide the refugee through the immigration process.

1. What does the word *vigilante* mean?

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\_\_\_\_\_ 2. What is the connotation of the word *smuggle*?

- A. fun      B. illegal      C. dangerous

3. What kind of figure of speech is the last sentence?

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4. Look at the words the author chooses in the first paragraph to frame the situation of illegal immigration. Do you think the author is sympathetic to the refugees? Explain your answer.

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