

- [www.stormfax.com/ghogday.htm](http://www.stormfax.com/ghogday.htm)  
This site provides historic information about Groundhog Day and information about the accuracy of Phil's forecasts.
- [kids.msfc.nasa.gov/News/2000/News-VernalEquinox.asp](http://kids.msfc.nasa.gov/News/2000/News-VernalEquinox.asp)  
NASA sponsors this great site that provides information about the seasons and special times of the year like solstices and equinoxes.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Cox, Judy. *Go to Sleep, Groundhog*. Holiday House, Inc., New York, NY; 2004.
- Crossingham, John and Bobbie Kalman. *What is Hibernation?* Crabtree Pub. Co., New York, NY; 2002.
- Freeman, Don. *Gregory's Shadow*. Viking, New York, NY; 2000.
- Levine, Abby. *Gretchen Groundhog: It's Your Day!* Albert Whitman, Morton Grove, IL; 1998.
- Perry, Phyllis J. *Animals that Hibernate*. F.Watts, New York, NY; 2001.



## Groundhog Day

### Grades K-4

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting programs in the video series *Holidays for Children*.

**Before Viewing:** Give students an introduction to the program by relaying aspects of the introduction to them. Select vocabulary and discussion questions to provide a focus for students when they view the program. Engage your class in a brainstorming activity to determine the prior knowledge that students have about the holiday.

**After Viewing:** Review the program and the information students brainstormed about the holiday. Help students to determine the accuracy of these ideas based on information they gained from watching the program and to add new ideas to their brainstorming list. Review the vocabulary and use the discussion questions and activities to inspire continued discussion. Encourage students to research the topic further with the Internet and print resources provided.

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#### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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#### The Holidays for Children Video Series

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| • ARBOR DAY                  | • HALLOWEEN                   | • PRESIDENTS DAY                         |
| • CHINESE NEW YEAR           | • HANUKKAH/PASSOVER           | • RAMADAN                                |
| • CHRISTMAS                  | • INDEPENDENCE DAY            | • REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11 <sup>th</sup> |
| • CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD | • KWANZAA                     | • ROSH HASHANAH/YOM KIPPUR               |
| • CINCO DE MAYO              | • MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY | • ST. PATRICK'S DAY                      |
| • EASTER                     | • MEMORIAL DAY/VETERANS DAY   | • THANKSGIVING                           |
| • ELECTION DAY               | • POW WOV                     | • VALENTINE'S DAY                        |
| • GROUNDHOG DAY              |                               |  |

Teacher's Guides Included  
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## Introduction

Will we have an early spring or six more weeks of winter? Ask Punxsutawney Phil the groundhog! Groundhog Day is a celebration of Phil, the famous weather-predicting groundhog from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Legend has it that if Phil sees his shadow on Groundhog Day, we'll have six more weeks of winter. This legend has a long history, harking back to German settlers who looked for weather-predicting hedgehogs in Germany and an old European tradition of weather prediction on the holiday of Candlemas.

## Vocabulary

**groundhog** — An animal with thick, brown fur, also known as a woodchuck.

**prediction** — A guess.

**Candlemas** — A Christian celebration when priests often bless candles.

**hemisphere** — One half of the Earth. The United States of America is located in the Northern hemisphere.

**solstice** — A time of the year when the sun reaches the farthest north or farthest south. In the Northern hemisphere, the summer solstice in June is the longest day of the year, and the winter solstice in December is the shortest.

**equinox** — A day that is equal parts night and day in all parts of the world. The equinoxes occur in March and September.

**meteorologists** — Scientists who study the weather.

**hibernation** — A sleeplike state that many animals enter in winter when the temperature gets cold.

**mammal** — A warm-blooded animal that has fur and produces milk to feed its young. Groundhogs are mammals.

**burrows** — Underground homes dug by animals like groundhogs.

**shadow** — A dark area caused when light is blocked by an object.

## Discussion Questions

- Legend has it that Punxsutawney Phil is able to predict the weather. Brainstorm with students a list of clues that they can use to predict the weather.
- Encourage students to discuss legends. What are they? Why do students think the story of Punxsutawney Phil is considered to be a legend? Can they think of other legends that they have heard?
- Discuss the idea of the change of seasons with students. What do they think causes the change in seasons? Have students describe the weather throughout the year where they live. Discuss whether the seasons change and, if so, what signs let students know that the season is changing?
- Groundhogs hibernate in the winter. Discuss with students what hibernation means. What happens to animals when they hibernate? Why do students think some animals like groundhogs hibernate?

## Follow-up Activities

- Students can imagine that they are newspaper reporters covering the celebration in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania on Groundhog Day. They can write a newspaper article that describes their eyewitness accounts of Phil's prediction from his burrow on Gobbler's Knob. Make sure students include catchy headlines for their articles!
- Locate Phil's home, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on a United States map. Use the map scale to figure out how far Punxsutawney is from where you live.
- With your students, make a class chart of predictions of whether or not Phil will see his shadow on Groundhog Day this year. After hearing Phil's prediction, calculate the percentage of accuracy of your class' predictions.
- Conduct a class research project on groundhogs, discovering important facts like what they look like, how big they are, what they like to eat and where they live. This information, combined with detailed illustrations, can be presented in a class groundhog book.
- Other animals, in addition to groundhogs, hibernate during the winter. Encourage students to learn more about other hibernating animals. Using this information, they can compare two of these animals in a Venn diagram.
- According to legend, Punxsutawney Phil predicts six more weeks of winter if he sees his shadow. Help students to see their shadows, too! You can outline kids' shadows with black construction paper taped to a wall and chalk, by shining a lamp on them. You can also trace the outlines of kids' shadows outside on the playground. Find out what happens if you outline the shadows at different times of the day in the same spot.
- A long time ago, many people celebrating Candlemas in Europe would say the rhyme, "If Candlemas be fair and bright, come winter, have another flight. If Candlemas bring clouds and rain, go winter and come not again." With your class, compare this rhyme with the legend about Punxsutawney Phil and his predictions. Encourage students to write their own rhymes about weather prediction on Groundhog Day.
- Students can keep weather journals, recording the temperature and precipitation on a daily basis. Encourage students to review their journals after several weeks. What patterns do they see over time? You can also invite a meteorologist to visit your classroom to discuss weather patterns in your area.
- The legend of Punxsutawney Phil provides an explanation for a weather event — in this case, the change of seasons. Encourage students to write their own legends that explain different weather events, like hail, wind or clouds.

## Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- **[www.groundhog.org](http://www.groundhog.org)**  
This is Punxsutawney Phil's official site, where students can learn more about the celebration of Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Students can also see a record of Phil's past predictions and find some fun groundhog activities.

*(Continued)*