

## **Holiday Facts & Fun:**



**Teacher's Guide**  
**Written by Barri Golbus**

**Produced**  
**by**  
**Colman Communications**  
**Corp.**

## Table of Contents

---

	Page
Program Overview	3
Viewer Objectives	4
Suggested Lesson Plan	5
Description of Blackline Masters	8
Answer Key	8
Transcript of the Video	9
Web Resources	15
Acknowledgments	16

Purchase of this program entitles the user the right to reproduce or duplicate, in whole or in part, this teacher's guide and the blackline master handouts that accompany it for the purpose of teaching in conjunction with this video. This right is restricted for use only with this video program. Any reproduction or duplication in whole or in part of this guide and the blackline master handouts for any purpose other than for use with this video program is prohibited.

# HOLIDAY FACTS & FUN: GROUNDHOG DAY

Grades K-5

Viewing Time: 12:20

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Intended Audience and Uses

*Groundhog Day* has been produced for students in primary and lower intermediate grades. It may be used on or near the holiday to help students understand when, where and how the holiday is celebrated each year, and to give them an historical context for the celebration. In addition, the program may be used in a primary science unit on climate and weather and/or a social studies unit on communities.

### Program Synopsis

The program opens with an introduction of Punxsutawney, PA, the epicenter of the holiday. The town is shown as a typical small community - - with one exception: the many statues and other depictions of a groundhog seen almost everywhere. Punxsutawney Phil, the world-famous animal that predicts when winter will end,



is introduced. Pre-holiday activities in Punxsutawney are then shown. Art projects, ice and wood carving, hayrides, musical programs, a race and a chili dinner are among the many activities held before the holiday begins. One of Phil's caretakers, Ben Hughes, shows how he takes care of the creature and then answers commonly asked questions about Phil and other groundhogs. Next, an historical overview of the holiday is presented in which viewers learn that German immigrants brought the holiday to America in the 19th century. A visit to the community's Weather Discovery Center follows. There, the scientific bases for weather phenomena (including the water cycle) are explained, and definitions of several weather-related scientific terms are given. The program then takes its viewers to the annual celebration at Gobbler's Knob, a large field where it is learned that this year six more weeks of winter (at least according to Phil) are in the offing. The last holiday activity shown is a pancake breakfast celebrants attend after the ceremony. A 10-question video quiz follows the body of the program.



## **VIEWER OBJECTIVES**

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Locate Punxsutawney, PA on a map.
2. Tell at least five pre-holiday activities associated with the event in Punxsutawney.

3. Explain at least three key facts about groundhogs and how they live.
4. Relate how Groundhog Day began and how it came to America from Germany.
5. Briefly describe the *water cycle*.
6. Define *evaporation*.
7. Explain what old wives' tales are and detail why we no longer use them to predict the weather.

*The producers encourage you to make adaptations and changes to the following lesson plan whenever you feel it will enhance your students' learning experiences. Only by tailoring the material to your unique classroom situation will you be able to maximize the educational experience afforded by these materials.*

## SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

### Viewing Strategies



This program can be employed in three distinct ways. First, the video and its ancillary material can be shown as a lesson on the holiday. Second, the program can be

shown in its entirety as an introduction and/or review session for students beginning their study of climate and weather. Finally, teachers may pick and choose various sequences and select ancillary print material to underscore concepts taught in their current unit on climate and weather or communities.

## Previewing Activities

*The producers encourage you to prescreen the program to familiarize yourself with its content.*

Ask your students if anyone knows holidays that take occur in February. Make certain that they know that at least two major holidays take place during the month -- Presidents' Day and Valentine's Day. Briefly discuss the holidays and how they are celebrated.

## Introduce the Video

Now say that the class will see a program about another



February holiday. Can anyone guess what it is? Hand out **Groundhog Day Terms** and go over each term with the class to help them understand, at least generally, what each means. If possible, have your students write a simple definition for each

term.

## Post-Viewing Activities

*It is important that students understand that the groundhog seen in the video is tame and is familiar with humans. In addition, the groundhog is handled by an adult trained to take care of it. Note that the groundhog at the ceremony is placed in a glass cage. The reason is that although the animal may feel comfortable around people, it*

*might accidentally become frightened and attack someone nearby. That's one reason why Ben Hughes mentioned that if a person comes across a groundhog in the wild, the animal should be left alone. Tell your class that all wild animals can be dangerous, and should be avoided.*

Ask the class if anyone knows another name for groundhogs. Pass out *More on Groundhogs*. Have your students complete this exercise as individual seatwork, in small groups, or as an oral class activity. After your students have completed this exercise, go over their answers and continue your discussion of the program, using *Discussion Questions: Groundhog Day*, if you prefer. After that, hand out *Wild Animals*. Next, hand out *Phil's Crossword Puzzle*. Have your students complete this exercise as individual seatwork, in small groups, or as an oral class activity. After your students have completed this exercise, go over the answers. Finally, have your students draw a picture of their favorite part of the program and post the pictures on the bulletin board under the heading, "Groundhog Day."



## Description of Blackline Masters

**GROUNDHOG DAY TERMS** – Helps familiarize students with some of the terms used in the program.

**MORE ON GROUNDHOGS** – Gives students additional information on the animal.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – GROUNDHOG DAY** – Provides the teacher with questions that focus on key concepts presented in the program.

**WILD ANIMALS** – Discusses the dangers of wild animals.

**PHIL'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE** – Strengthens student vocabulary.

## ANSWER KEY

**Video Quiz:** 1. Punxsutawney, PA 2. b.  
3. Cobbler's Knob 4. false 5. meteorologist  
6. false 7. b. 8. badgers 9. c. 10. rain, snow,  
sleet, hail

**Groundhog Day Terms:** 1. a place where people live, work and play 2. being alike, resembling 3. a carving or casting 4. a person who lives somewhere 5. a story, not based on any scientific knowledge, handed down from one generation to the next 6. a person who does not eat meat 7. rain, snow, sleet or hail 8. liquid turning into vapor 9. water falling to earth, going to lakes, ponds, rivers, oceans and then evaporating back to the atmosphere 10. a scientist who studies the weather

**Wild Animals:** Possible answers: bees, wasps, skunks, raccoons, opossums, deer, coyotes, etc.

**More on Groundhogs:** Possible answers: groundhogs called woodchucks and whistle pigs; make loud whistling sound; 16-26 inches long, weigh 4-6 pounds; live 4-years in wild, more than 7 years in captivity; enemies include wolves, coyotes, foxes, bears, hawks, owls; can climb trees and can swim; defends itself with teeth and claws; eats grasses, berries, nuts; hibernates from October to March or April.

**Phil's Puzzle:** Down: 1. Punxsutawney 2. ice  
3. knob 4. tornado Across: 1. Phil 2. second  
3. weather 4. cycle



## TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

At first glance, it looks like many other small towns.

It has a business district, churches and houses -- just like many other communities of similar size.

But it doesn't take long to notice that there's something very different here.

For almost everywhere you go, there are statues of a friendly little animal.

And throughout the town the animal's likeness can be found on lamp shades and, in winter, as ice sculptures.

You can see the furry creature in windows and on the side of buildings.

They're all depictions of a groundhog named "Phil."

The town that Phil calls home -- this town -- is Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. So he's usually called "Punxsutawney Phil," or "Punxsy Phil," for short.

And he's by far the town's most famous resident, especially every February 2nd -- Groundhog Day.

For several days before the holiday, this normally quiet community begins to hum with activity (or in this case, roar and scrape.)

A field called "Gobbler's Knob" is cleared for the holiday's most notable event: when Phil predicts how much longer the winter weather will last.

About two miles away, in downtown Punxsutawney, many people begin to flock to the stores and take part in pre-holiday activities:

They have fun doing art projects.

They carve ice and wood.

They go on hayrides; listen to rock, folk and other kinds of music; run in a race; eat a big, spicy dinner with many different kinds of chili; and watch famous and near-famous people who have come for the festivities.

This one is an actor who was featured in "Groundhog Day," a well-known movie named after the holiday.

But as we mentioned, this is the real star of the holiday -- Punxsutawney Phil.

His home is in the town's library.

Ben Hughes is one of the people who takes care of the furry creature.

He makes certain that there is plenty of clean straw and woodchips in Phil's cage.

He feeds the animal and keeps track of its health.

As you might imagine, Mr. Hughes can answer almost any question about Phil and other groundhogs, such as, "What does Punxsutawney Phil eat?"

BEN: Groundhogs are vegetarians. For Phil, his favorite food would be dandelions. And he'll eat the green part as well as the yellow part.

NARR: Another question people often ask is, "Who lives with Phil?"

BEN: Two groundhogs live in the zoo with Phil -- Phyllis and Barney.

Groundhogs live in groups. And actually, a groundhog's home is a lot like your home.

Groundhogs have separate rooms with separate functions. So they actually have a separate bathroom, a separate living area, and separate areas where they sleep.

NARR: A very important question many people ask is, "Do groundhogs make good pets?"

BEN: It's important to know that groundhogs are wild animals. In most states, you're not allowed to have a groundhog that lives in your home.

So as an important reminder: when you see them in the wild, that's where they should stay.

NARR: And finally, this question: "How did Groundhog Day begin?"

BEN: It came from a time when people lived in a one-room house all throughout the winter. And they just longed and longed and longed for winter to be over.

So they looked for ways to predict that weather.

NARR: Those people -- who lived on the continent of Europe -- already celebrated a holiday, called Candlemas, on February 2nd.

On that day, worshippers brought candles into churches, and a priest would bless those candles, which were to be used during the upcoming year during church services and in homes.

Many people believed the weather conditions on Candlemas Day foretold what the weather would be for the rest the winter.

If it was sunny on Candlemas Day, they believed a long, cold winter lay ahead.

If the day was cloudy, cold and rainy, they thought an early spring was on the way. Over time, tales and proverbs (or ancient sayings) developed around those beliefs.

For instance, long ago, in Germany (called the "German Confederation" in those days) people recited the following poem:

"On Candlemas Day, badger looks from its hole. And if it sees both clouds and snow, it knows warm winds soon will blow.

"But if it sees bright sun in sky, winter winds won't soon die."

In the 19th century, many of those Germans came to America and settled in the Punxsutawney area.

The town's historical museum has many displays that show that the new settlers who came to these once-held Indian lands became coal miners, lumber jacks and farmers.

Those early settlers brought traditions and stories from the old country, including the tale about how badgers could predict the weather.

But there were no badgers in western Pennsylvania.

So, in time, people used groundhogs in the story because groundhogs *were* found in the area.

At the Punxsutawney Weather Discovery Center, visitors can learn about both tales and facts.

One fact they often learn is that the first official Groundhog Day in the town was celebrated in 1886, and has been observed there every year since then -- to this very day.

Visitors at the Center can learn many things about the weather and weather forecasting, too.

They can learn what it's like to be a weather forecaster on TV.

They can create a storm -- one with wind, thunder and lightning.

And they can learn about tornadoes, including the direction in which those violent twisters turn.

They can also find out about weather symbols, as well as the "water cycle," in which precipitation -- rain, snow, sleet and hail -- falls to the earth from the sky; flows into rivers, ponds, lakes, seas and oceans; moves back into the sky in a process called "evaporation;" and then falls back to earth to begin the process once again.

Weather scientists -- they're called meteorologists -- know a great deal about the weather today because they use computers, satellites and a number of other advanced devices.

So today we don't use old wives' tales (such as "When the cows stand tall no rain will fall") to predict the weather.

Even so, it's still fun to celebrate Groundhog Day, especially if you're in Punxsutawney.

There, you can join thousands upon thousands of celebrants at Gobbler's Knob early in the morning, before sunrise.

Dancers entertain the audience while everyone waits for Phil to make his appearance.

There are also speeches and a giant fireworks program.

Right after sunrise, Phil makes his appearance.

And his prediction is announced.

Some people aren't too happy with Phil's prediction.

Others are very happy about it.

Happy or not, after the ceremony people pose for snapshots, take pictures, and get a closer look at the fuzzy animal.

And everyone seems to agree that...

KIDS: ...Punxsutawney Phil rules!

NARR: Here's something else that rules -- yummy pancakes hot off the griddle.

People who have just spent several hours out in the cold think they taste great!

The Groundhog Day Pancake breakfast is a perfect way to end the festivities.

Each year, the people who celebrate Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania have a wonderful time.

They've seen interesting sights and have heard lots of great music.

Many have learned a thing or two about groundhogs, and even more about the weather, including -- how scientists now know how to predict the weather using scientific instruments, not old wives' tales.

And *you* have learned how the holiday started and how it has changed over the years.

The celebration may be a little silly.

But, then again, there's certainly nothing wrong with being silly at least once a year, on February second -- Groundhog Day!

## Video Quiz

1. What is the name of the town where "Phil" lives?
2. Phil's favorite food is -- a. carrots. b. dandelions. c. hamburgers.
3. The field where Phil makes his prediction is called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. True or false? Phil lives with two other groundhogs -- Phyllis and Bobby.
5. What is another name for a weather scientist?
6. True or false? If you see a groundhog, you should bring it home to be your pet.
7. A long time ago, people in Europe celebrated a holiday on February 2nd called -- a. Presidents' Day. b. Candlemas Day. c. St. Patrick's Day.
8. Instead of \_\_\_\_\_, German immigrants used groundhogs in their stories about animals' predicting the weather.
9. The "water cycle" helps explain how -- a. water flows in a drain. b. Fog comes from wind. c. rain moves from sky to earth, then back to sky.
10. Three kinds of precipitation are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

### Web Resources

---

The Official Punxsutawney Groundhog Club Site

<http://www.groundhog.org/>

Provides the latest information on Groundhog Day

National Geographic Groundhog Site

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/groundhog.html>

Contains good basic information on the animal

The National Weather Service  
**<http://www.weather.gov/>**  
An excellent source for almost anything you would ever  
want to know about the weather

Acknowledgments

Punxsutawney Community Center  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Culinary Arts Center  
Punxsutawney Elks Club  
Wizard's Workshop  
Punxsutawney Weather Discovery Center  
Punxsutawney Area Historical  
and Genealogical Society  
Punxsutawney Spirit  
Punxsutawney Chamber of Commerce  
Ben Hughes  
Jean Curtis  
Martha Rupert  
Mary Jean Johnston  
Jeff Hanson  
Erick Lauber  
Mary Jude Troupe  
Jeff Grube  
Marty Armstrong

## Discussion Questions – Groundhog Day

1. What is the name of the town in the program? (Punxsutawney, PA)
2. What is unusual about Punxsutawney? (It has many statues and other likenesses of a groundhog.)
3. Where are the likenesses of Phil found? (lamp shades, ice sculptures, in windows, on the side of buildings)
4. What is Punxsutawney Phil's nickname? (Punxsy Phil)
5. What date is Groundhog Day? (Feb. 2)
6. What things do people do in Punxsutawney a few days before the holiday? (art projects, carve ice and wood, go on hayrides, run in a race, listen to various kinds of music, eat a big chili dinner, watch famous and near-famous people)
7. Where does Punxsutawney Phil live? (in the Punxsutawney library)
8. What is the name of the man who takes care of Phil? (Ben Hughes)
9. What are some of the things Ben does to take care of Phil? (makes certain there's enough straw and woodchips in Phil's cage, feeds him, keeps track of his health)
10. What is Phil's favorite food? (dandelions)
11. How many groundhogs live with Phil and what are their names? (two, Phyllis and Barney)
12. Describe groundhogs' homes. (Have separate areas for bathroom, living area and sleeping area)
13. Why don't groundhogs make good pets? (because they're wild animals)
14. What did the priest do with candles on Candlemas? (blessed them)
15. What did people believe about the weather on Candlemas? (It foretold what the weather would be for the rest of the winter.)
16. What animal did the German people believe could predict the weather? (badger)
17. Who lived in the area of Punxsutawney before German immigrants came there? (Indians)
18. What can people learn about at the Punxsutawney Weather Discovery Center? (weather tales and facts)
19. What February 2 holiday was also celebrated long ago, in Europe? (Candlemas)
20. What three jobs did early settlers in Punxsutawney have? (coal miners, lumberjacks and farmers)
21. What year was Groundhog Day first celebrated? (1886)
22. Name four kinds of precipitation. (rain, snow, sleet, hail)
23. What is the process called in which water moves from the earth into the sky? (evaporation)
24. What is a meteorologist? (a weather scientist)
25. Name two advanced devices meteorologists use today to predict the weather. (computers and satellites)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

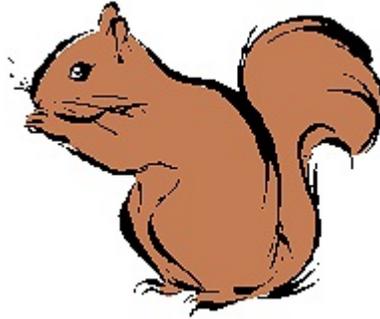
## Groundhog Day Terms

Directions: Define the word(s) in the space below each term. The words are used in the video, "Holiday Facts & Fun: Groundhog Day."

1. Community
2. Likeness
3. Sculptures
4. Resident
5. Old Wives' Tale
6. Vegetarian
7. Precipitation
8. Evaporation
9. Water Cycle
10. Meteorologist

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Wild Animals



*Directions: Read the information below about wild animals. Then write the names of wild animals you have seen in your neighborhood.*

The squirrel you see above looks cute, furry and friendly. But squirrels are wild animals, just like groundhogs. In fact, squirrels and groundhogs are members of the same animal family. Do you remember what Ben Hughes said about staying away from groundhogs? He said you should leave them alone. All wild animals should be avoided. You should not go near a wild animal because you never know what it will do. Wild animals usually frighten easily. When frightened, they often bite and scratch. That's why you should never go near them.

There are many wild animals in neighborhoods. In addition to squirrels, there are birds. Can you think of any others? Write the names of those animals below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## More on Groundhogs



*Directions: Read the information, below, on groundhogs. Then, to see how much you have learned, write 5 facts you learned about these interesting animals. Use the back of this paper, if necessary.*

Groundhogs are often called woodchucks. In parts of the southern United States, they are also called "whistle pigs" because they make a loud whistling noise when they feel threatened.

Groundhogs are 16-26 inches long and weigh four to six pounds. They normally live three or four years in the wild. But they can live seven years or more in captivity. As Mr. Hughes mentioned, humans and dogs are their enemies. In the wild, their enemies are wolves, coyotes, foxes, bears, hawks and owls.

Groundhogs are often able to escape from their enemies by swimming and climbing trees.

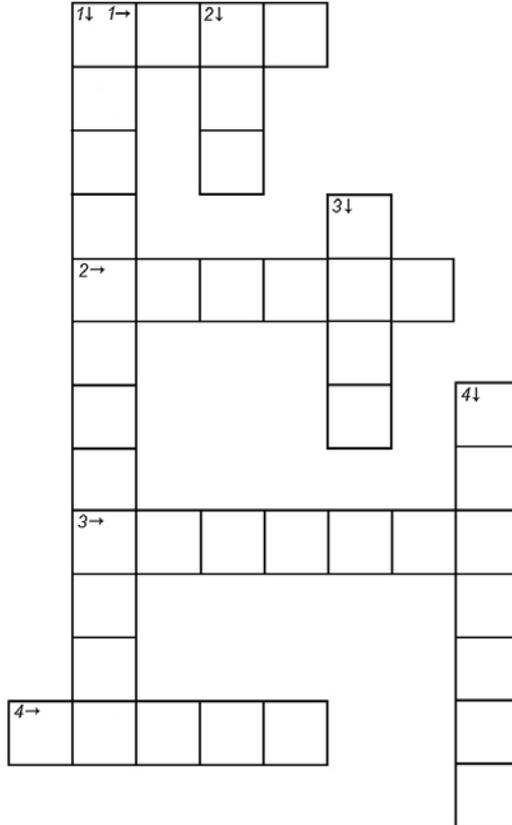
If a groundhog can't escape, it is able to defend itself with its large front teeth and its sharp claws.

They eat grasses, berries, nuts and other plants all summer long. They store up fat for the winter, when they hibernate in their underground burrows. Their hibernation period usually lasts from October to March or April.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Phil's Puzzle

Directions: Groundhogs can't write, of course. But Phil wants to complete this puzzle. So you'll have to help the furry animal. See if you can.



**Down**

- 1. Where famous groundhog lives
- 2. Carved on February 2
- 3. Cobbler's \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Dangerous whirling wind

**Across**

- 1. Famous groundhog
- 2. Day in February Groundhog Day is celebrated
- 3. Discovery \_\_\_\_\_ Center
- 4. Water movement, water \_\_\_\_\_