

Over time, animals that hibernated through winter were woven into the lore. Germans developed their own version of the legend, pronouncing the day sunny only if hedgehogs saw their own shadows. They pronounced:

*For as the sun shines on Candlemas Day,
So far will the snow swirl until the May.*

When German immigrants settled in Pennsylvania in the 18th and 19th Centuries, they brought the custom with them. However, hedgehogs are not native to the United States. Groundhogs, hibernators who resemble hedgehogs, were plentiful in the area and became the new four-legged weather forecaster. The first documented American reference to Groundhog Day can be found in a diary entry dating from 1841.

In 1887, a newspaper editor belonging to a group of groundhog hunters from Punxsutawney, called the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club, declared that Phil, the Punxsutawney groundhog, was America's only true weather-forecasting groundhog. A tradition was born that has continued until this day.

Groundhog Day Today

On the morning of February 2, people trek to Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, where Phil's burrow resides. A band of local dignitaries known as the Inner Circle presides over the ceremony. Its members wear top hats and conduct the official proceedings in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. They like to say that they speak to the groundhog in "Groundhogese."

In 1993, the movie *Groundhog Day* starring Bill Murray brought attention to the holiday. Today, as many as 40,000 people converge on Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney each February 2 to witness Phil's prediction. The Punxsutawney Groundhog Club hosts a three-day celebration featuring entertainment and activities.



Name _____

Groundhog Day True or False?

1. _____ If the groundhog sees his shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter.
2. _____ The tradition of Groundhog Day can be traced back to Europe.
3. _____ Irish immigrants brought the tradition with them to America.
4. _____ At one time, Groundhog Day was a religious festival.
5. _____ Songs were written to commemorate the holiday, then called Candlemas.
6. _____ The animal used in Europe was the hedgehog.
7. _____ Groundhog Day was first celebrated in America in New York.
8. _____ Punxsutawney Phil lives at Gobbler's Knob.
9. _____ Up to 20,000 people go to see Phil on Groundhog Day each year.
10. _____ Phil's predictions are correct most of the time.



Name _____

Groundhog Day Longer Winter or Early Spring? Planning Sheet

Some of us love winter; others prefer spring. Would you like Phil to see his shadow and have a longer winter? Or would you prefer he not see his shadow and have spring arrive a little earlier? Use the space below to collect your thoughts. Then write Phil a letter on the next page.

I prefer: (circle one) More winter An early spring

Reason One:

Reason Two:

Reason Three:

Groundhog Day Word Search

H C A R M D N B K G P Q F W N
E I P I N A M Y O X V Z E B O
B W B E N G M H Q H Q A B U I
V U G E O A D M A C T V R R T
R E H M R N V H A H A Q U R A
L E W W U N C L E L E H A O R
B N T O K N A R Y S P B R W B
C P R N H D N T Q S X P Y O E
N G F Y I F V R E J N G L Y L
H Z Y E N W A T U S K N U P E
W O O D C H U C K L N I E C C
W O D A H S J E C M F R X P P
B I O H S E N R O P E P V H V
Q T B L B E G Q P F Z S I J V
P W R F E I D O V Q R L R K I

BURROW
PHIL
PUNXSUTAWNEY
SHADOW
LEGEND
GROUNDHOG
SPRING
WOODCHUCK

PENNSYLVANIA
EUROPE
MAMMAL
HIBERNATE
FEBRUARY
WINTER
WEATHER
CELEBRATION

