

Teacher Guide - Punxsutawney Phyllis

Here are **discussion questions** for Punxsutawney Phyllis by **Susanna Leonard Hill**. Pick and choose which questions are most age appropriate for the whole class, a small group, or an individual.

Pre-reading/Predicting Skills - Show class the book cover. Read the title. Take a "picture walk" looking at the illustrations through the book.

1. What do you think this story is about?
2. Where do you think this story takes place?
3. What time of year do you think this story takes place?

Read the book aloud to the class.

1. What is Phyllis's problem?
2. How does she try to solve this problem?
3. What happens when she tries to convince the other groundhogs that she can do the job?
4. Do you remember some of the ways Aunt Sassy and the others try to wake Uncle Phil?
5. Which way works?
6. Why does Uncle Phil say that there will be six more weeks of winter?
7. Why does Phyllis say there will be an early spring?
8. Do you remember any of the signs of spring that Phyllis showed Uncle Phil?
9. Which do you like better: winter or spring? Why?

10. What is your favorite part of the story? Why do you like it?
11. What is your favorite picture? Why do you like it?
12. Has there ever been a time when you felt sure you could do something, but other people said you couldn't? Did you get a chance to try? Who was right?

Extension Activities for Punxsutawney Phyllis

Science

Phyllis finds several signs of spring. Ask your students how many they can think of. Make a chart.

On or near Groundhog Day, take your students for a walk outside. How many signs of spring do they see? Mark the chart. Have each child make a prediction: will there be six more weeks of winter, or an early spring?

In April, take your students for another walk outside. How many signs of spring do they see now? Mark the chart. Check the predictions. Who was right?

What are the other seasons? Can your students think of signs of summer? Autumn? Winter?

What do your students know about groundhogs? Do they know that groundhogs hibernate? What are signs of hibernation? What other animals can they think of that hibernate? What are some other things animals do in winter to survive the cold? (Migration, adaptation.)

Kinesthetic

Print Phyllis and/or Uncle Phil paper dolls on cardstock - one for each child. Have the children color the dolls, then cut them out and place brass fasteners in the appropriate spots. Display.

Visual/Spatial

Give each child a blank sheet of paper. Have them draw a picture of a groundhog. If it is near Groundhog Day, have them make a prediction and write it on the picture: early spring or six more weeks of winter. Display on a divided board, with those who vote for early spring on one side and those who think there will be six more weeks of winter on the other. You can use this same activity idea with the coloring pages of Phyllis and Uncle Phil.

Social Studies

What do your students know about Groundhog Day? What date is Groundhog Day? What happens on Groundhog Day? How does the groundhog know if there will be an early spring or six more weeks of winter?

What other holidays can your students think of? Does every month have a holiday? What is the difference between holidays like Christmas and Passover (religious), Halloween and Valentines Day (just for fun), and Fourth of July and Martin Luther King Day (historical)? What different things do holidays celebrate? Are there some holidays that everyone celebrates and others that only some people celebrate? Which ones? Why?

Music

Teach your students The Groundhog Day song. Sing it!

Story Starters

Believe In Yourself!

Do you remember learning to dress yourself? Learning to tie your shoes? Learning to ride a bike? Learning to swim? Were you sure you were ready to leave the training wheels behind, or that you could swim all the way out to the dock?

Write a story about something you knew you could do, even though other people didn't think you were ready.

Imagine

What would happen if winter never came?

What would happen if winter never ended?

What would happen if all the groundhogs slept right through Groundhog Day? Who would make the prediction about spring instead?

Groundhog Day Cancelled!

Pretend you woke up on Groundhog Day and the radio announcer said, "Important news flash! This just in! Groundhog Day has been cancelled!"

You finish the story. Why has Groundhog Day been cancelled? What is the problem? Can you solve it so that the groundhog will come out and make his prediction and everyone will know whether to expect six more weeks of winter or an early spring?

Punxsutawney Phyllis...

Make up another adventure for Phyllis! What will she do now?
(And look for **Punxsutawney Phyllis and The April Fools**, coming
from Holiday House in 2011!)